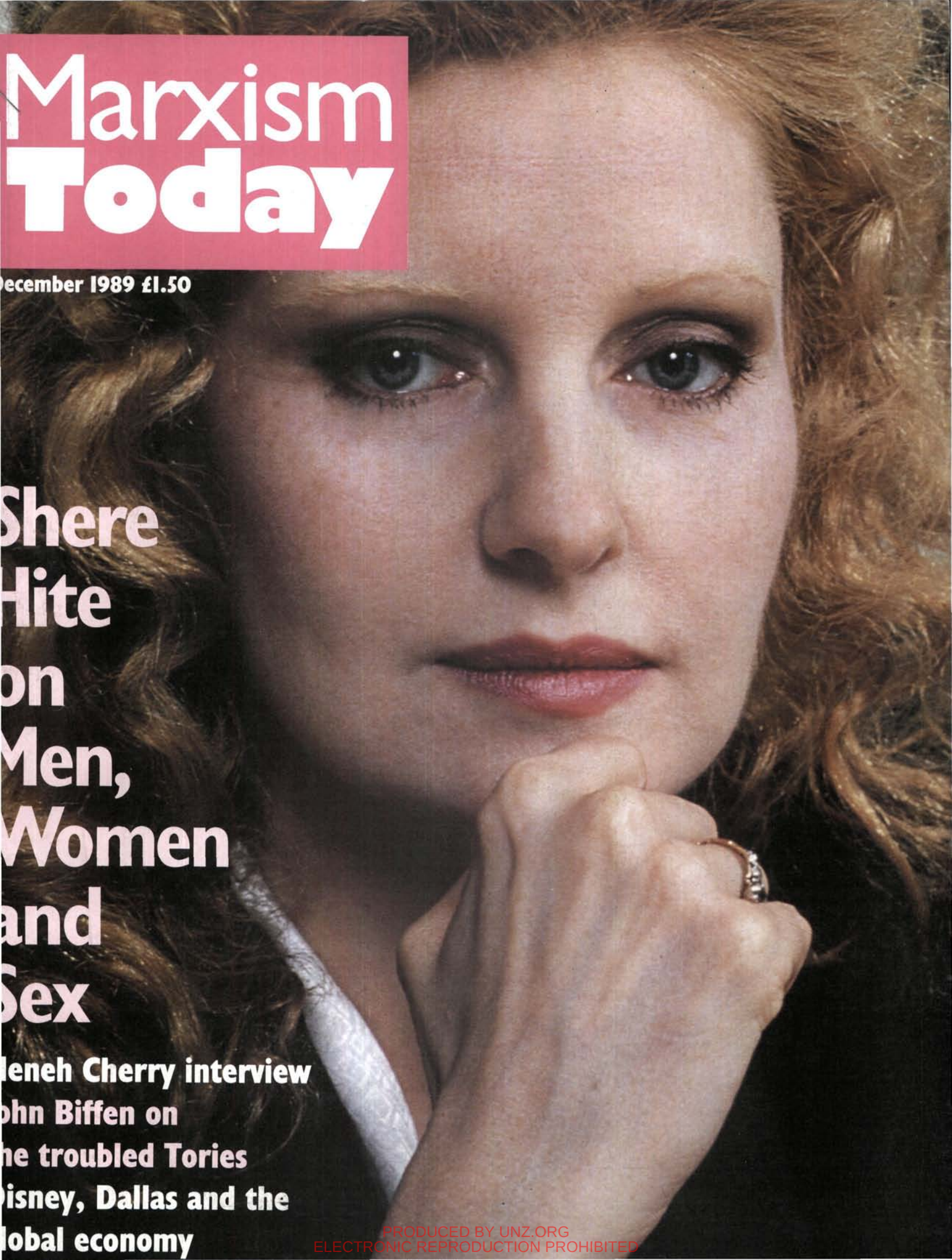

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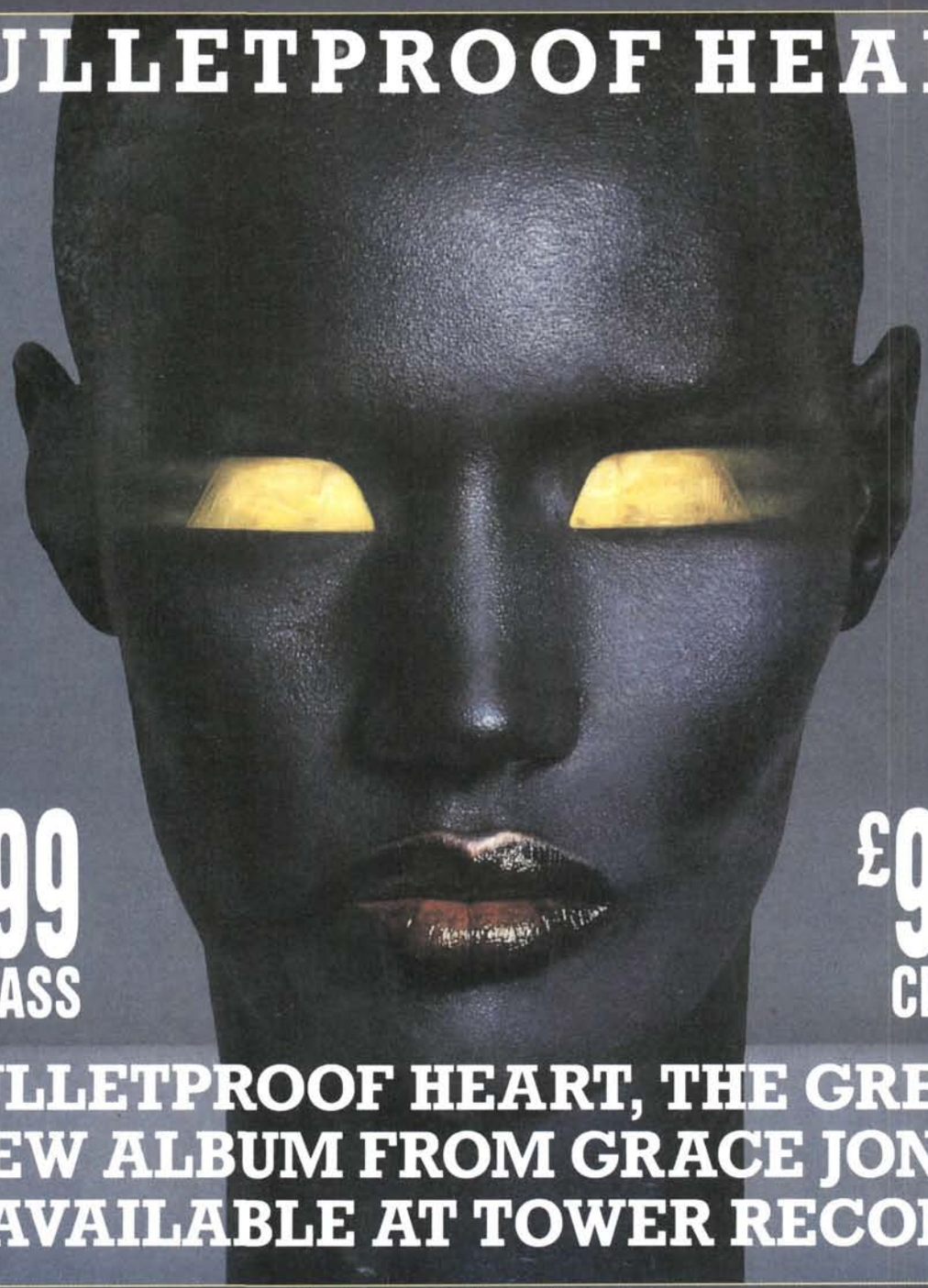

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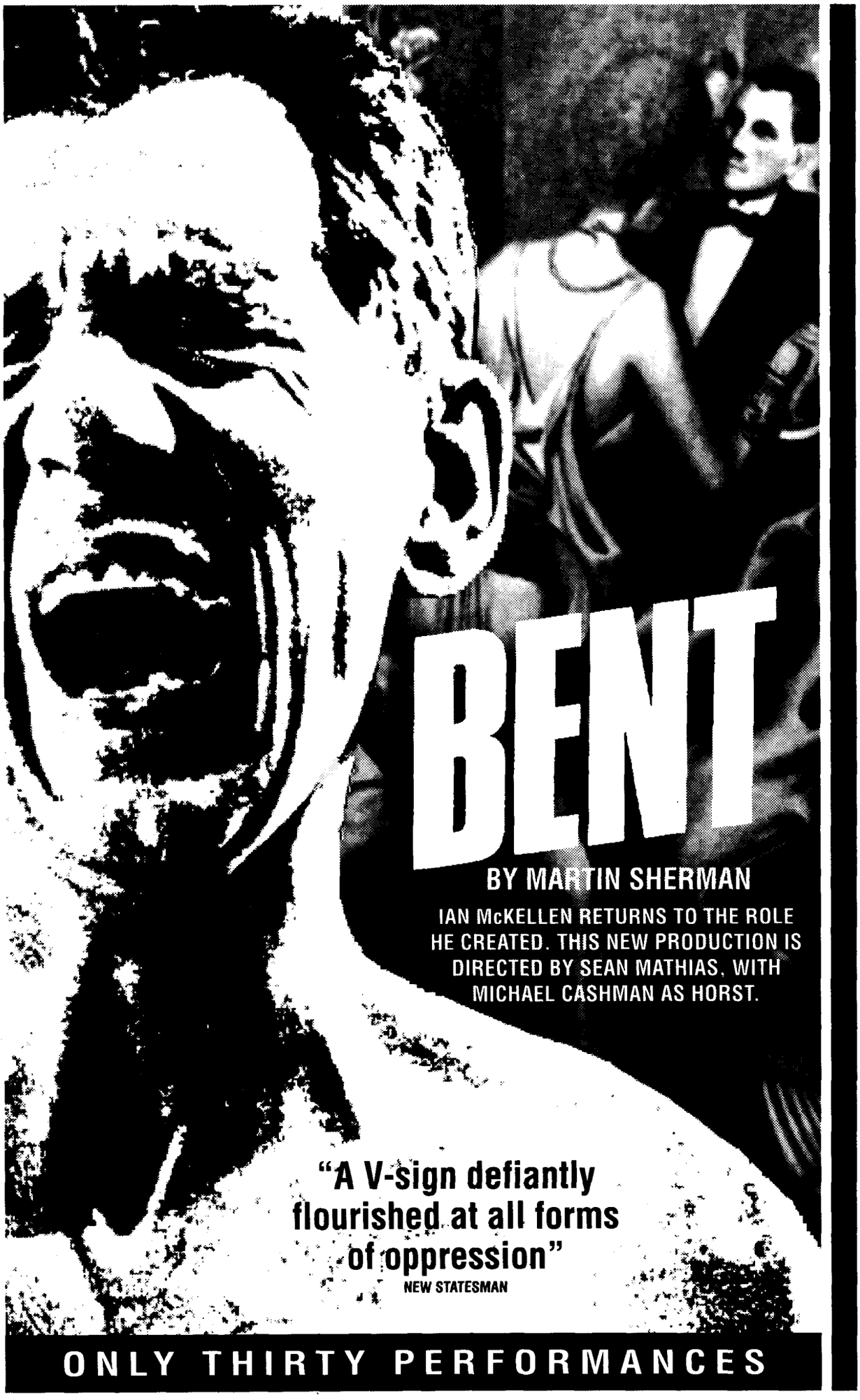

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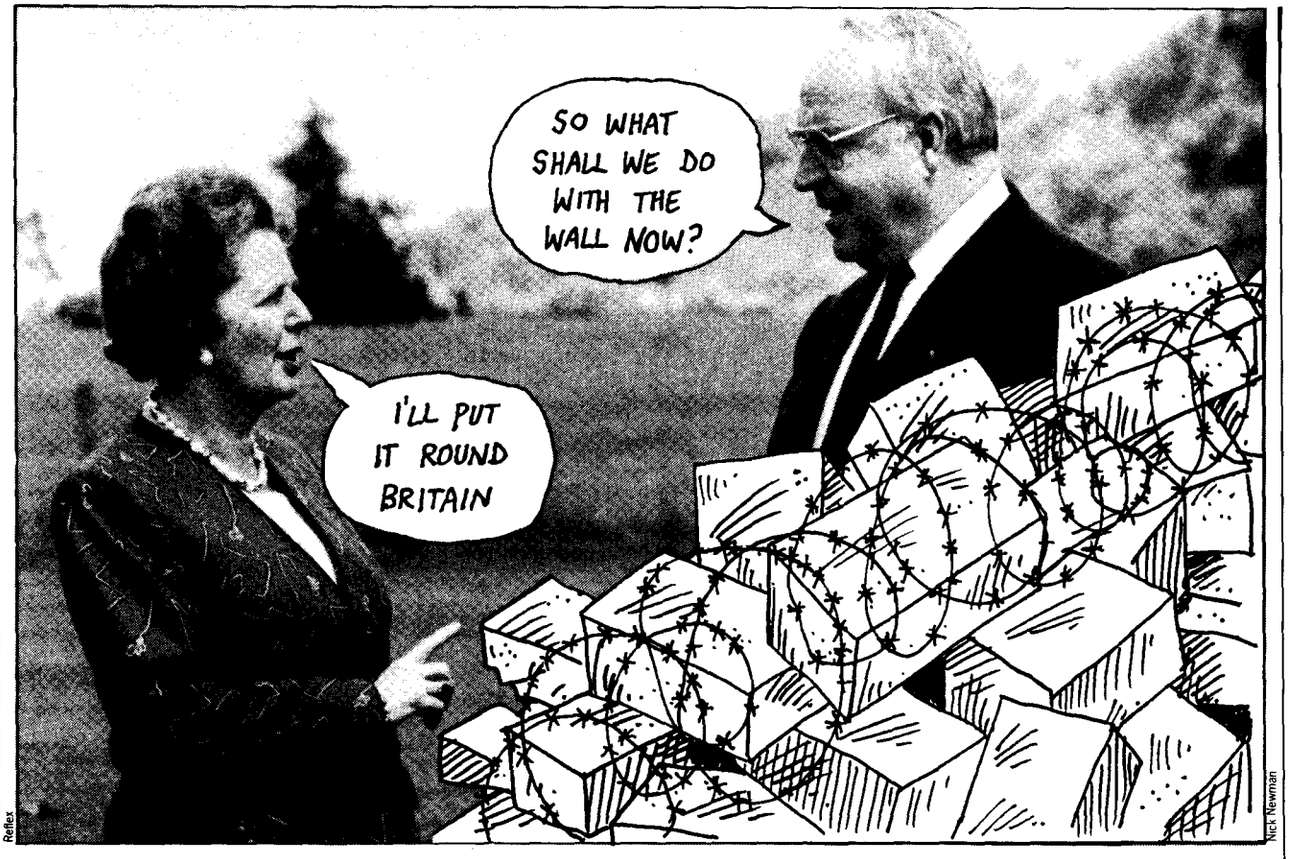
Andrew Gamble on the great European divide

Backs To The Wall



For some time the Conservatives have been unable to agree about Europe. It is not that they have no clear policy. Margaret Thatcher has made it abundantly clear where she stands. But a growing number of her colleagues reject her position. Since 1981 the most serious policy disagreements inside the Thatcher government have been over the relationship of Britain with Europe. Two of these have boiled over into dramatic ministerial resignations, by Michael Heseltine and by Nigel Lawson.

Supporters of the prime minister think the current proposals for economic and monetary union and the social charter would create a centralised European bureaucracy with the power to intervene in the British economy. Britain would get socialism by the back door.

The second reason for opposing steps to greater European integration has been more visceral. The prime minister detests alternative political centres of power. She finds acceptable the erosion of government power through markets, but she has resisted any loss of government power to alternative political organisations, whether trade unions, local authorities or European bureaucracies.

The pro-Europe faction in the party regards the loss of British sovereignty as irreversible and the reality of interdependence as inescapable. In this post-imperial era they want to see Britain becoming a full partner in the creation of a European Community integrated economically and politically.

This debate has now been overtaken by the speed of the democratic revolution in East Germany and central Europe. The opening of the Berlin Wall pushes to the forefront the question of German reunification, and with it the future of Nato and the Warsaw Pact. It poses new and urgent questions about the way the European Community will develop. Should it now expand greatly in size? Should it become the new framework for European security?

The future of Europe will dominate the 1990s. The danger for the Conservatives is that their policy disagreements over Europe might turn into something much more serious. Great issues of principle have in the past divided the party and could yet do so again.

The issue this time is Germany. Thatcher fears that German reunification will be achieved through the neutralisation of Germany and the withdrawal of the United States and the Soviet Union from West and central Europe. The prospect of a united Germany once again dominating central Europe makes some governments keen to 'anchor' Germany in a more integrated Economic Community. They reason that a powerful political federation would prevent any one power becoming a threat to its neighbours. A strong Community would also be the best way of managing economic relationships with the countries of central Europe and the Soviet Union.

Thatcher sees no merit in this plan. She favours strong nation-states linked together through a free European economy based on unrestricted movement of goods and capital. Political and security issues would be dealt with not through a strengthened Community but through Nato. Germany would be unified if at all, only after a long period of negotiation. In the meantime the military alliances would remain and with them the American presence in Europe.

What Thatcher seeks to preserve is American involvement in Europe and with it the Anglo-American political and military relationship. She seeks to avoid a federal Europe because that would make the relationship with Germany the new centre of British policy.

The Conservatives are deeply split over the prospect. A more integrated European Community with a united Germany at its centre will be created in the 1990s. Britain can seek to influence the form this integration takes by committing itself wholeheartedly to it. Or it can stay aloof and risk becoming a weak, dependent economy on the periphery of the Community. Only the first offers any prospect of renewal and an escape from Britain's debilitating imperial legacy.●

Andrew Gamble

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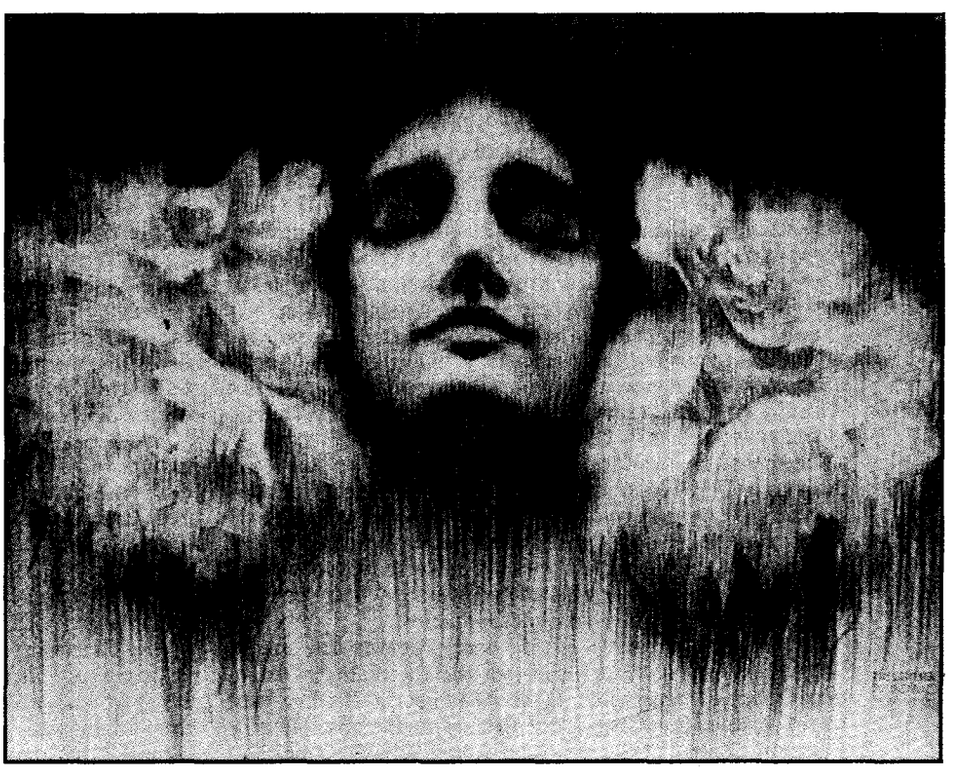

Ferenc Helbing, *Dream*, c.1900, Hungarian National Gallery

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In which **Paul Morley** looks back in trepidation

Something Obvious

Hands up those of you who thought that everything that happened during the 1980s was bleeding obvious, with uncertain variations. For me – and I use that me for one of the very last times, I promise – the 80s were so bleeding obvious I'm in tears. We all went slowly mad and nothing was surprising.

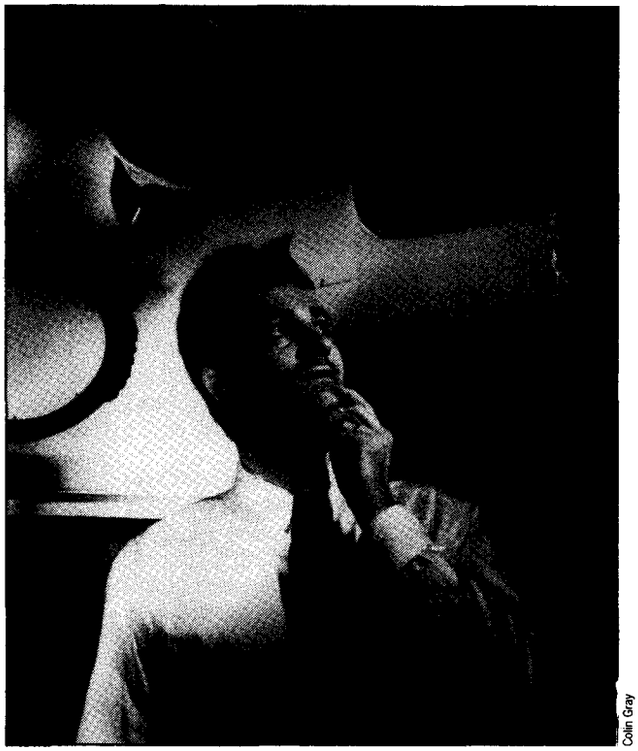
At least, this is what my notes say. Anticipating that mobile, mad and sulky commentators like me would be asked to look back 'at the end of the day' or, as luck would have it, the end of the decade, I carefully took notes throughout the 80s.

These notes make bleeding obvious reading. I'm in tears as I read them. I particularly like an entry written during the mid-80s: 'There is a certain sickness in this drive for ever-increasing consumption. The danger is that, by being filled with a need for consumption, the person does not solve the problem of inner passivity, of inner vacuity, of anxiety, of being depressed – because life in some way doesn't make sense.' See what I mean?

It gets worse, or better, depending how unique the bleeding obvious is to you. In 1987, after the 200th edition of *Countdown*, the programme that launched Channel 4, I was cheerfully noting that the time had come when everything had been seen. Books were read as though they had already been read. Jokes were laughed-at as though they had already been spoken. Music had been heard. Films had been seen. Life had been lived. You could no longer see anything for the first time. People arrive in the middle of things because there is no question of what had happened. People leave in the middle of things because there is no question of what will happen.

You probably realise that I wrote that when the post-modern was pretty fashionable, until that montage-scanning disease of the obvious became itself as obvious, and as objective, and as stubborn as the heavy petting of *The Sun*.

It was fun when the post-modern was for real. You could shine in the artificial daylight of your own obvious me-ness, and as a self-mocking, self-seeking, product-sucking commentator using initiative in the pages of glossy gaze magazines, you could nearly have the time of your life. You could refer to history as if it were some kind of video promo, the present as if it were a mass hallucination or a bio-tech rehearsal for leaving the body. The future had already happened, and all was bleeding obvious.



Colin Gray

Looking at my real-life notes, every year I was saying the same thing: What a *sarcastic* year, we must be kidding ourselves, but that was all obvious, I mean, what did we expect? Proportion, elegance, common sense? We were jostled, and it was a *sarcastic* decade. I'm pretty sure of this.

In the 80s, apparently, according to my notes, it was fashionable to verge on favouring social determinism, but I guess such an attitude is going to seem pretty safe and harmless in the 90s, which we must now admit won't be some fantasy, some time of leftover and left behind, but something close, challenging and implosive.

We thought everything was going to disappear, but I think, if I've read my notes correctly and if this isn't just some backlash against apolitical cynicism, everything is just beginning to appear. What do I mean by *everything*? It's obvious isn't it? The 90s as the decade of post-everything will lead us back to everything. We won't have left behind modernity, class politics, labour and production, imperialism, fascism and the phenomena described by classical and neo-marxists ... everything we thought we had discarded will come back to taunt us, all the levels and lines of thought and behaviour that we pretended to be ahead of will have to be taken seriously. The 80s was playtime, the 90s will be hard work. One thing is for sure – you won't want to hear about *me* anymore.

You may be thinking, if you're paying attention, why the change of heart? Bear with me a little longer, and allow into your heart a few more me's, before the sun comes down and my theme tune plays (this column now has a theme tune: Dave Brubeck playing Cole Porter's *Anything Goes*). It all happened as I was writing all the essays that had been commissioned from me, as a sulky solopsist who knows the right beats and where to stare and who to talk to and all that 80s hoo-ha, and I was nearly having the time of my life.

I must have cleared six or seven look-backs at the decade, weighing the amount of hair lacquer *MT* had worn in all that time, growing old with Bono from boy wonder to apprentice world saviour, losing weight with Oprah, going shopping with Jonathan Ross, eating eggs with Edwina, watching tv with Jeremy Isaacs, designing underwear with Viv Westwood, sifting the past and obviously so on with S'Express, swinging thrill deep through America, tap-dancing along with some trad French post-mod jazz, being so sarcastic it made me cry.

'You could refer to history as if it were some kind of video promo, the present as if it were a mass rehearsal for leaving the body'

By some bleeding obvious quirk of deadline, I had even finished and delivered next month's 'something column', a mish-mash or whizzing and wishing through the decade that spins and spans from thirtysomething to Beirut and Belfast via me ... and more me.

'Now wasn't that bleeding obvious', I cleverly, some would say smugly, wrote about the 80s, lazily and half-heartedly predicting, as you always do at times like this, the end of *MT* and the end of the Berlin Wall. Then *MT* crumbled, and then the Wall crumbled, and the decade ended with a bang, and I had already delivered my well-dressed, pressed and posed essays on the end of history and the drift of life.

I realised too late that everything hasn't happened. Everything is about to happen. The 80s was all about *me*. The 90s is all about us. And that's what my notes say. Was it obvious all along?●

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Beatrix Campbell steps inside the Tory Party's crisis

State Of The Nation

John Biffen is Conservative MP for Shropshire North

Margaret Thatcher's two major personnel crises have been over Europe. Isn't there an intractable problem here for the Conservative Party?
Well, if we can take the Lawson affair first. Nigel Lawson has made it very clear he favours fixed exchange rates. The only system of fixed exchange rates available to him was the European monetary policy. I don't regard Lawson as a *communautaire* Tory. He is essentially the same kind of conservative as the prime minister, favouring a Europe of nation-states rather than a Europe where increasing power is concentrated in the institutions of either Brussels or Strasbourg. I do not accept that the division was about the European Community because I think that Lawson was a tactical *communautaire* for the purposes of the exchange rate, but not beyond that.

Westland in 1986 was a more pragmatic situation. Defence is not formally within the European-Community discipline, but Michael Heseltine had made it quite clear that he hoped to see a rationalisation of procurement policies of the European Nato countries. So he started off with a predisposition to favour a so-called 'European solution'. It's very easy to exaggerate the Community dimension of the Westland affair.

Even if the Europe factor was subordinate for Mr Lawson, wasn't the effect of the argument to push the boundaries of Europeanism beyond the limits that were acceptable, for Mrs Thatcher and probably for yourself and indeed the majority?
No. A deal had been done. The government had been committed to membership of the exchange rate mechanism, but with a most Augustine lack of immediacy. After the Madrid summit that membership objective was made more specific. On the other hand conditions were attached to membership of the mechanism, related domestically to bringing down the rate of inflation, and in the community context to the fulfilment of the single market and the liberalisation of exchange controls and capital movement. The row was over the operation of the exchange rate mechanism in the transitional period.

Is one of the problems that the crisis has been represented as one of Mrs Thatcher's management and manners?
It is now quite clear that this dispute is of long standing. What triggered it was unease at the recrudescence of inflation. The prime minister, I believe, felt that the deliberate weakening of sterling (by linking it to the deutschmark) set off monetary movements which then became the precondition for the very substantial rise in credit. I think it quite likely the prime minister wanted to keep a closer eye.

This of course spoils so many illusions because the prime minister is supposed to be omnipresent in government and no minister can crouch over his morning papers without feeling the hot breath on his shoulders. The case here is that the Treasury was not subject to anything like the close attention of 10 Downing Street that is popularly assumed.

What is your assessment of Lawson's economic performance? And what is the legacy of Thatcherism's economic strategy?
Nigel Lawson has acquitted himself with a most formidable degree of competence on the actual resignation issue. Although he is now beyond the grave he is in many ways *strengthened*. Whereas the prime minister has *survived*, but it has been a quite damaging episode from her point of view. The government has in prospect a difficult 12-18 months as the economy adjusts to this squeeze, which will result in a lower rate of growth, very clear hardship for quite a number of people, a degree of bankruptcy and I suppose to some extent, unfulfilled expectations. Politically, that must mean a period of bad by-elections and a general test of nerves within the Conservative Party.

Is Thatcherism at an end?
It isn't something that I recognise as such – except that I constantly read about it. But you'd have to decide whether or not I am a Thatcherite!

Do you think you are?
I think I am a Biffenite! I am basically a sound-money person, therefore I view the objectives of government as balancing the budget without very much borrowing. I am a monetarist, but I am not a great supply-side Conservative, so I accept higher levels of taxation and public spending than a many of my colleagues.

The rest is really about nationalism and that is the area of politics I find the most fascinating. Having been an unsuccessful opponent of British membership, I now see the European Community potentially in Gaullist terms: of nation-states stretching from the Urals to the Atlantic. What is now happening in Eastern and central Europe brings about a new challenge, that of German unification and the emergence of the new nationalisms – or revived nationalisms – of the Warsaw Pact countries.

The Community is simply not responding to this external challenge. How does Europe live with the reunited Germany in a situation where the Americans are poised significantly to downgrade their political and military presence in Europe, and the Soviet Union is returning to its European heritage after an absence of several generations? We have to go back to before 1914 to get a sense of what is now happening in Eastern Europe.

I find the current Labour Party position depressing because the preoccupation with Delors, it seems to me, goes much wider than the social charter. Delors is the architect of economic and monetary union, a man who talks of up to 80% of our law being made in Community institutions. In other words it's all a move to a centralised political structure in Western Europe at the very time when you want disaggregation so that you can respond with more sensitivity to what is happening.

Do you mean in order to encourage accommodation of the Warsaw Pact?
Yes. The structure which should embrace a Europe from the Urals to the Atlantic is going to be a diverse Europe. I don't for one moment believe that there is going to be a great triumph of the market economy approach in East Europe. You can see quite clear national characteristics in all these countries which will be expressed in social and economic structures. There's absolutely no need for the uniformity now being sought in the European Community.

One of the most absurd side winds of the European discussion is this constant talk about a federal Europe. There is no proposition for a federal Europe; the Rome Treaty makes it quite clear, it is for a centralised Europe. What I find irritating is that there was a time when I felt the Labour Party would be a very proud and consistent standard-bearer, and would prefer the more intimate structures of national government for carrying out social policies.

It sounds like you still feel a strong pull towards the anti-marketeer stance of people like Enoch Powell and Eric Heffer. One of the interesting things about Enoch Powell is that he never really adhered to the cold-war view of the Soviet Union. Would you share that?
Yes.

Can I ask you about the state of the party? You have a party that has taken ideas and the mobilisation of a national political project very seriously. It has been very successful. You can now no longer say that

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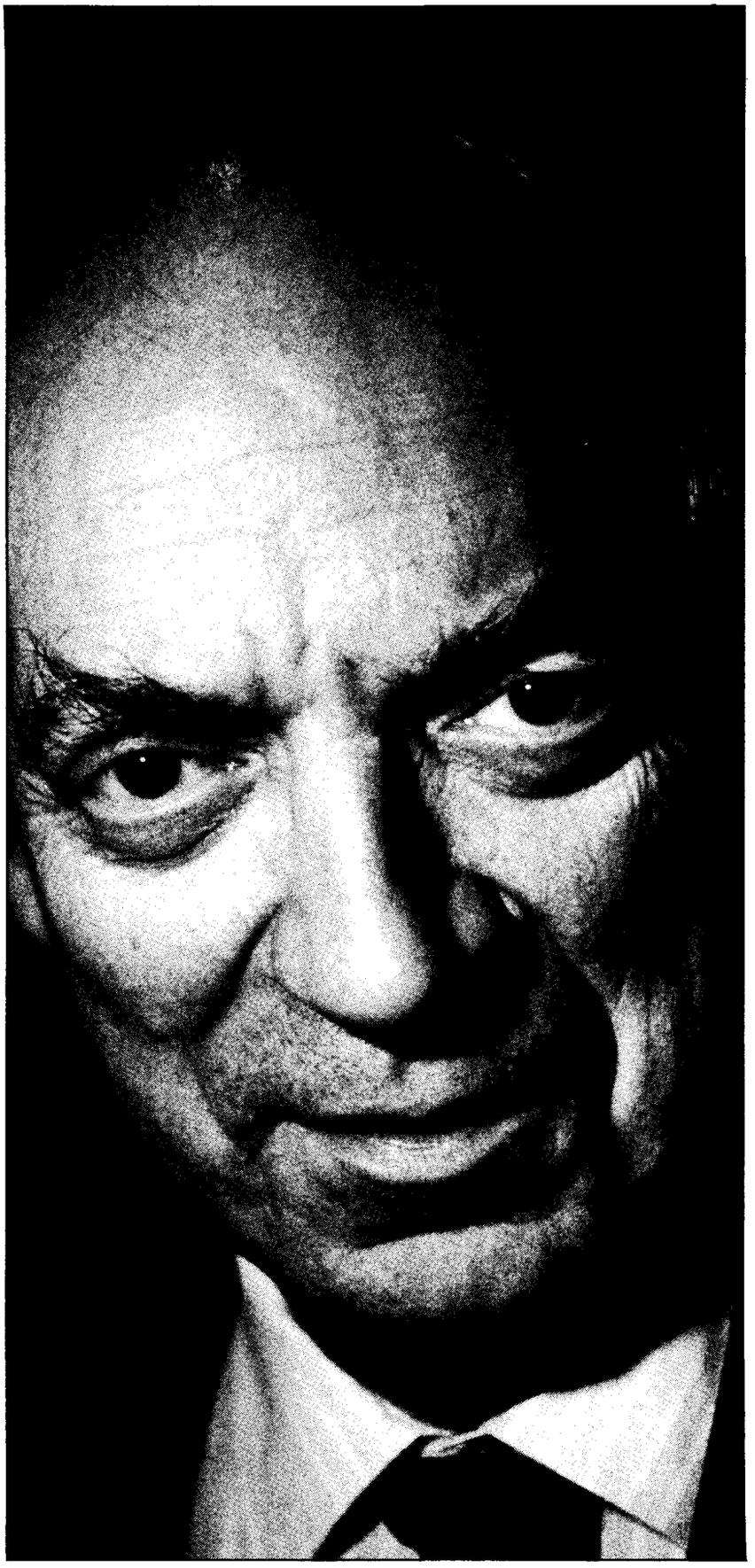

Jeremy Grayson

it is the 'stupid party'. But it is not a party that has an infrastructure for public debate, for factions to organise for their position within it.

It is amazing how this swing from being a party of *administration* to a party of *innovation* occurred. It was largely the reaction of the top echelons of the Conservative Party being concerned about the extent to which they were travelling in the wake of their opponents.

I am radical in my politics and I welcomed and argued for the changes. But I am also a high Tory and always will be, and I think a great deal of Conservative approach to government is purely administration, problem-solving on a limited scale. It is not attempting to fashion societies but to try and redress the ever-changing balances within society.

Do you want a return to the administrative tradition?

The most important thing to me is foreign policy – the Europe *des patries*. I would be prepared to make a great many concessions to get development in that direction. In some ways it is a reconstitution of a Europe which existed pre-1914.

Is that the project of the 1990s?

I think it will be events in Germany and possibly in the Warsaw Pact which will determine the timing of the agenda.

So Europe: where it is, what it is and what it is there for, is the debate of the 90s?

I want a Europe which can breathe, having been freed from the wholly-unnatural nuclear confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union, which is part of the global ambitions of the United States and to a very limited extent of the Soviet Union. This nightmare was not part of Europe's quarrel. It is the most exciting thing that is in prospect and I believe it will lead to a relationship between nation-states which doesn't involve any artificial creation of centres of continental power. Those are deeply offensive to my Tory instincts about nationhood and the intimacy of societies. This is a subject about which I feel a perfectly legitimate degree of emotion.

Are you, like Mr Powell, a nuclear disarmer?

I certainly believe that it is the logic of Britain's position to be as much a non-nuclear power as the Federal Republic of Germany. I am bewildered that the Labour Party, which had got a reasonably coherent policy on the changing nuclear balance in Europe, has put it to one side. We will not have an intelligent nuclear debate for quite a while.●

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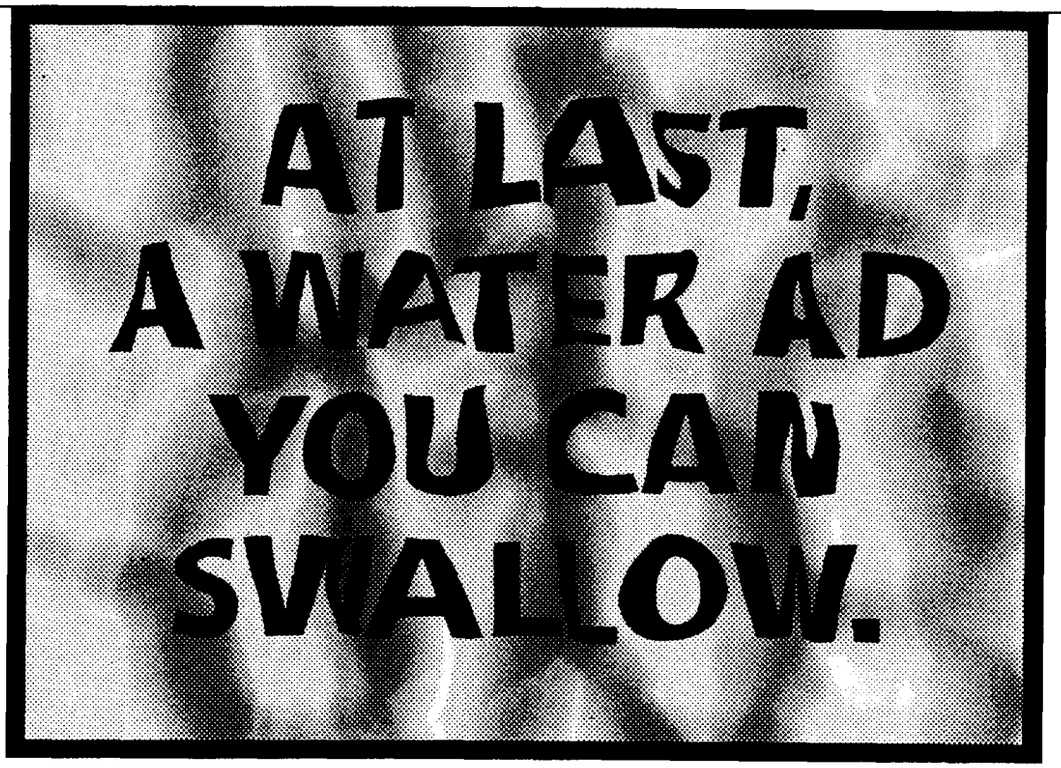

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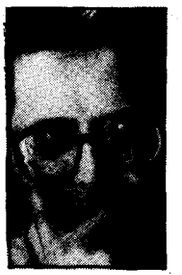
Martin Kettle delves into the European social charter

Ignorance Is Bliss



If any one event can be said to have changed the British Left from European agnostics into European enthusiasts then it was Jacques Delors' speech to the 1988 TUC conference at Bournemouth. And if any one project has oiled the wheels of that change then it is Delors' commitment to the 'social dimension' of European integration. That commitment is now embodied in the proposed Social Charter of Workers' Rights which will be agreed by most EC member-states – Britain excepted – at December's momentous Strasbourg summit.

Monetary union may be the issue of the moment in European politics – as well as the one which has split the British Conservative Party with extraordinary force – but it is the social charter which has been the real catalyst in this process. It is hard to overestimate the charter's importance in focusing the latent anti-Europeanism of the Thatcherites. It was, for instance, the charter, not the European Monetary System, which provoked the most pivotal phrases of Mrs Thatcher's Bruges speech in which she denounced 'utopian' European integration.

The September 1988 conjuncture of the Delors Bournemouth speech and the Thatcher Bruges speech set the parameters of the European issue in British politics for more than a year. But its effect was also to freeze debate about the social charter in a particularly sterile way.

For the British Left, and especially for British labourism, the charter has assumed immense symbolic and actual significance. Jacques Delors has become the first Frenchman since Napoleon to be both a real hero and a real villain in British political life.

For an optimistic and influential stratum in the labour movement, the charter has become the means by which the disturbed balance of British class politics can be redressed from afar. Whether that view is ultimately right or wrong, the charter has certainly notched up one important achievement in British public life already, by legitimising the Left's U-turn on the European project against which it had campaigned for two decades.

In October this year, British unions were conspicuously well-represented in the international demonstration held in Brussels in support of the social charter. More than 10,000 people turned out, and it was genuinely affecting to see British trades unions marching with French, German, Belgian and other nationalities for an international cause.

Nevertheless, it is always a mistake to be idealistic, and pan-European politics offers especially seductive temptations of this kind. Anyone who believes that the British labour movement has undergone a cultural sea-change will have been brought face-to-face with reality by the interviews with October's demonstrators recorded in *The Guardian* by John Palmer, the paper's European editor. 'I was never too keen on this common-market business until Maggie Thatcher turned against it so hard,' a busman who had made the long journey to Brussels from Birmingham told him. 'Reckoned there must be something to it after all.'

There, one suspects, speaks the true political vernacular of the British labour movement on European matters. Anything that Thatcher's against can't be all wrong. There are many worse yardsticks, of course, but it frankly won't do as a sufficient European policy for the British Left.

How many people, for instance, have actually read this charter which we all abhor or adore? Ignorance of the charter's contents is very widespread and much of the debate about it is conducted by people who don't seem to have studied it. But the time when simplistic support for the charter as a Good Thing would suffice has long passed.

At the heart of this problem is an important constitutional question: who shall make the rules? Europe or Britain? Second, what about enforcement? The draft charter is, after all, a declaration, not a binding document. But an action plan will eventually accompany it, setting out the legislation which the individual states must pass if it is to become enforceable. If Britain were to 'adopt' the charter, whatever that means, there is little consensus about how it would be enforced, whether domestically or internationally.

Then there is the content of the charter itself. This covers a whole range of specific rights on subjects such as working hours, redundancy procedure, free movement of labour, legislated rates of pay, minimum wages, union membership, training, information and consultation, health and safety, the position of young workers, the handicapped, retirement provisions, minimum pensions and more. These are, to put it mildly, not uncontroversial subjects, even in traditional labourist terms.

Take just one example. What is the Left's view about workers' participation in management? The Bullock report on industrial democracy more than a decade ago split the last Labour government down the middle because it could not agree whether workers on the board should mean union representatives on the board. If the Left is any clearer about such issues now, then you could be forgiven for not knowing it.

'Jacques Delors is the first Frenchman since Napoleon to be both hero and villain in British political life.'

But there is also a whole strategic dimension to the charter which the insular British have not yet addressed either. Notwithstanding our own recent experience, northern European countries like ours are used to legislation of this kind. We therefore tend to regard the charter as largely a restatement of the social-democratic agenda, if an unduly labourist one. But what about the effect of such legislation in southern Europe where, generally speaking, such provisions are less well-entrenched, if at all, and where their adoption would be bound to force up costs and change the shape of industrial and labour markets?

The Left will cheer, at least privately, if Britain is isolated at Strasbourg this month. Anti-Thatcherite circles will be thick with high-minded *communautaire* rhetoric. But this has become an inadequate response. The Left now needs to work out the consequences of its enthusiasm. Europe isn't just a fad. Or is it?●

Nick Kobyluch

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PREVIEW

Julian Stringer looks at some compulsory seasonal cheer

Happy Families

Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without the promise of a new Disney film. The talk of last year was *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, this year the studio is putting out *Oliver And Company*, its 27th full-length animated feature.

These seasonal events are significant because they're as traditional and familiar as plum pudding. Somehow, we're most aware of Disney at this time of year, the name itself seeming to become synonymous with the very leanings of populist sentiment. Disney habitually signifies the reinstatement of family and community values, and it is during the Christmas period that these ideologies are most actively reworked in the media and in everyday life.

Recently, we've seen the publicity over the share issue for Disney's latest community venture, its theme park on the outskirts of Paris, 'Euro-Disneyland'. In the face of yet another testament to the Disney corporation's public visibility, it's hard not to admire the resilient way in which the name has survived. Seemingly, anything can be made Disneyesque, with a little application.

'The magic kingdom is a pretty exclusive place: things don't usually happen to people who aren't in families'

Certainly, Disney films bear the imprint. The enduring appeal of *Snow White*, *Pinocchio*, *Dumbo* and all the rest, is evidence that Disney for 50 years seems to have pitched its ideology of family entertainment just right. Unfortunately though, the magic kingdom is a pretty exclusive place when it comes down to representation: only children and parents exist there, so things don't usually happen to people who aren't in families. And those families are organised along some delicate lines: they have to repress a lot in order to function harmoniously.

Many Disney films are, in fact, nothing more or less than straight Oedipal stories. The most striking is probably *Bambi*. The whole colourful event is a peg on which to hang an apology for the continuation of male power. The hook to grab the audience is little Thumper: we're encouraged to share his ironic and knowledgeable viewpoint, and so acquiesce in the elimination of Bambi's mother and oversee Bambi's safe passage to the role of father. Moral and social dilemmas in Disney all tend to revolve around the process of fitting in to your family.

Ariel Dorfman and Armand Mattelart really threw salt in the apple pie when they suggested (in their book on Disney comics, *How To Read Donald Duck*) that there are irreconcilable tensions and conflicts in those happy families, just as the facade of the ordered and friendly Disney studio broke down while its employees held a long and bitter strike against poor working conditions there in the 1940s. Dorfman and Mattelart went on to find the whole Disney aesthetic to be built on principles of sexism, racism and imperialism. They accused Disney of strategic exploitation in the name of capitalist relations. Luckily, Walt wasn't around to read that one.

What those critics refused to take on board was the question of pleaure. Disney texts may expresss the most insidious and reactionary of ideas; very often we know their characteristic sentimentality to be the refusal of divergent attitudes and beliefs. Yet there is something appealing about them nevertheless. Successive generations have lapped the films up, investing time and money in pleasures recognised as comfortable and familiar.

The most familiar thing about a Disney film is its concern for narrative. The story is everything. Across the studio's output (not just the animated features with which the name is most closely linked, but also live-action, instructional and semi-documentary films) is a constant reiteration of the mechanics of classic tale-telling. In the most famous stories, the meaning of each and every thread of action is accounted-for according to the rules of linearity; ambiguity is played down. We're meant to put faith in the 'happy ending', the moment when, as in *Lady And The Tramp*, all problems are suddenly made indiscreet with the welcome appearance of a new family (three little ladies the spitting image of mother, one little tramp to carry on his father's good work).

The secure re-establishment of heterosexual normality coincides with the safe arrival home, the integration of the individual in society, the turning of one season into another – anything, so long as it gives a feeling of natural continuity. Disney plugs into the most mythical of American narratives, making them its own.

You know when a Disney narrative is myth-making. A giveaway is to be found on the soundtrack – the presence of one of those truly awful voice-overs. The voice has a clear-toned, well-scrubbed larynx and it's as white as it is male. The authoritative tone of that voice works to place the viewer, it guides us by the hand, urges us how to think and feel. In such a way, a Disney film constructs all spectators as children, confident that things will work out in the end. Anything seems to be explicable by the ins and outs of cause and effect.

The setting for such narratives is, ideally, within an enclosed boundary, where codes of action and thought can be safely asserted and contained. Disney films are the best example in the American cinema of the small-town ethic, the homespun philosophy stating that anything not to be found on your own doorstep is instantly suspicious. In the small town, a white picket fence surrounds every family home (or a leafy forest surrounds the woods' inhabitants) and the misfits all live down *that* end of the street. It is a place small enough to imbue with folk wisdom, large enough to compare favourably with the pretensions of the big city.

The classic town inhabitant is the resourceful small-fry, the fundamentally good and sweet character whose simplicity is a source of humour. What we seem to find funny in Disney may be a visual gag, a comic situation or a clever routine, but often it's the rudimentary details of characterisation.

The fictional characters who belong in Disney's own star system are the ones who get to sing, be colourful and give simple delight. They may first be encountered on the screen, but they actually end up leading multi-media, hideously over-determined lives. The promotion and repetition of their faces across all media helps to maximise a feeling about Disney; a generalised, internationalised sense that everything is fun and laughter.

This may be the cross-cultural image but it often grates against the evidence of Disney narratives. Some films exhibit most forcefully the flip-side of Disney's joviality, namely its violence. Take the notorious *Victory Through Air Power* for instance. Released in 1943, it was Disney's supreme contribution to the war effort. It doesn't use star characters, neither is it a film that leaves you in stitches. Passed over with visible embarrassment today, it was an attempt to utilise animation in the espousal of the perceived necessities and joys of long-range strategic bombing. From any angle, it is one of the most depressing films ever made, looking for all the world like propaganda for the apocalypse.

Victory Through Air Power may not be as well-known as *Fantasia* or *101 Dalmations*, but it's still as Disney as a mickey-mouse watch. All the films attempt, in different ways and with differing emphases, to secure the continuation of what Disney defines as 'normal' and 'natural'. At times of crisis, when the values of family, community and nation are threatened by an outside enemy, such attempts take on an almost paranoid intensity. However, it's in the everyday, domestic setting that Disney is most at home. At such relaxed moments, Disney's world seems the embodiment of peace and security.●

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Charlotte du Cann on dressing for safety

The Depths Of Fashion

This December (between 7 and 10), London's Olympia is the setting for the first 'Clothes Show Live'. The show is testament to the phenomenal popularity of the BBC's latest fashion programme.

But for all its sartorial splendour, fashion does not fit happily into the small screen. Like those holiday programmes which reduce each country and culture they visit to a bland pulp, the fashion programme manifestly diminishes the excitement of the real thing.

But then *The Clothes Show*, like the rest of Britain, does not really admire the real thing. Its popularity is due to the fact it endorses native parochialism and puritanism ('fashion is as fashion does') and provides the viewer with a wardrobe that is useful rather than aspirational. In spite of 10 years of Thatcherism, we still have a deep-rooted distrust of spending a lot of money on clothes, and anything that smacks of conspicuous consumption is treated with the wariness of a Luther fingering some papal velvet.

The Clothes Show takes its format from *Blue Peter* and its visual style from Marks & Spencer. It is genuine family entertainment and guaranteed not to shock anyone's grandmother. (Which is, after all, what fashion does best.)

Anything that *is* shocking is smugly contained and sanitised. Punk, had it featured on *The Clothes Show*, would have merited a knowing nod and a joke warning ('we don't advise anyone to try the safety pin through the nose').

Nothing kills style quicker than a microphone. Which is why anything in the least part visionary, intelligent or radical is better illustrated in a magazine where it is left alone and not explained in words of one syllable.

Even the awesome talents of Ms Vreeland could not cope with the nasal questioning of Jeff Banks ('why *exactly* do you think pink is the navy blue of India?') or indeed his answers ('Ms Vreeland has declared that everyone should think pink this spring so we have sent Selina down to Brent Cross to try the new colour out').

Visual ideas, particularly in Britain, do not spring from acquiescence, but revolt against the order of the day. They are based on the disaffection of the individual against the status quo. To illustrate this needs a certain courage and arrogance, something which *The Clothes Show* with all its genteel good intentions cannot really provide.

The Clothes Show is about belonging, fitting in and believing that all earthly treasures are found somewhere in a shopping mall, where freedom is consumer choice (and good value for money). Mrs Thatcher must love it. ●

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Wholly Green

New World Politics

From Jean Lambert, Green Party representative to the European Parliament

The 'international actuality of ecological crisis', as Sarah Benton puts it (*Waiting In The Wings, MT* November), and the lack of response to this by establishment political parties, is exactly what has given rise to green parties. There are parties developing in East Europe, Latin America and other parts of the world as well as West Europe. They are growing in response to the late-20th century problems of the threat of nuclear annihilation; a growing world population with an ever-widening trench between rich and poor nations, and environmental destruction on a scale which technology cannot 'fix' and which will take decades, if not centuries, to repair.

People are forming green parties because they believe the old politics based on 19th-century problems and analysis, geared to the development of national interests, cannot adjust rapidly enough to new conditions and international perspectives and responsibilities. The Greens may well face challenges as to how they develop but they don't carry the historical baggage of representing only one set of interests – so there will be no heavily-disguised U-turns or philosophy reviews disguised as policy ones for the Greens!

But Sarah Benton is wrong, I believe, to see a fundamental divide between the 'earthly stewards' and the 'tribunes of the people', as she dubs them. Greens realise that you cannot secure the future of the planet in isolation from addressing the needs and behaviour of its peoples. It is this linking of planet and people, recognising needs beyond the material-standard-of-living measures of *people* (so beloved of all those who embrace the 'all economic growth is progress' philosophy) that conventional political thinkers find so hard to stomach. Hard, because it demands we address difficult questions such as: What is development? What standard of living can the planet sustain for all its peoples? Are many of us living too well at the expense of others' poverty – not simply in terms of national redistribution, but on a global basis?

There is a growing constituency for people willing to take on green politics, trying to answer those questions. Sarah is right in that the constituency is not an easily-defined one in traditional terms. It does not represent for example, all the supporters of environmental pressure groups, many of whom may feel passionately about single issues, but who do not see the need to change the system that causes the problems!

The Greens' constituency seems to be forming from those who have not been truly represented by the political values and patriarchal practices of traditional parties – 'flexible' people who do not feel comfortable or who do not fit into hierarchies; people who feel a need for individual action as well as government responses. Many women find green politics express their concern for the social and physical environment in which they live and the power structures that shape their lives.

Such a constituency will not be bought off by policy changes in other parties alone. Those parties cannot maintain their primary goals of increasing national wealth and thus individual wealth through increased production and trade, if they are serious about the future of peoples on this planet. Greens will not be content to be the 'tail wagging the dog' of a red or blue colour (even with green extremities!). The role of the Greens is to change the underlying philosophy of the political agenda; to make deep-seated changes in response to new times.●

End Of Ideology

From Udo Knapp, parliamentary assistant to Die Grünen

Sarah Benton comments (*MT* November) on how the British Greens are seen – both by themselves and the public at large – as the guardians of the Earth and also as Cassandra, standing firm against its impending destruction. A poetic self-image this may be, but the claim cannot be fulfilled or redeemed.

Taking the burden of responsibility for the entire world is to ignore the limits and possibilities of politics and can lead to sanctimonious droning, which the daily reality of the struggle for survival cannot sustain. Such a political self-image runs the risk of bringing tyranny or a monopoly of the truth 'in the name of the common good' (Hegel). This can only be a reality at the level of the state.

Green fundamentalists and traditional left-wing socialists have much more in common than their opponents, where vigilance and progress are concerned, if our experiences as West German Greens over the last 10 years are anything to go by. Both camps want to bring justice to the vale of tears that is human existence on earth, by ecological and social liberation respectively. The former speculate on leadership by a cast of eco-priests, while the latter still believe in the goodness of state technocrats, bringing joy to the people from above.

Both questions, ecological and social, can only be asked in relation to the West's systems of development, if those systems radicalise their relationship to democracy, openness and consensus. They will remain stable and their destructive aspects will not be turned against humanity *only* if they directly bind human beings into the new societal structures.

The question of ecology is coming to the fore as the single most fundamental question across the planet. But nowadays this is almost a truism. The green voice is already speaking from many hearts.

What it comes down to is that the 'Industrial Age' – with its ideological rigidity and patent remedies – is giving way to an ecological culture of 'muddling through', which seeks to make human self-sufficiency the basis for human rights and individuality within a civil society.

This has meant an uneasy alliance in all European Green parties over the last 20 years. They have grown out of diverse non-parliamentary movements – anti-authoritarians, ex-communists, small-c conservatives and feminists – into a single political party. I hope this party will soon be in a position legitimately to defend ecological policies against the societal weight of self-justifying partisan interests. Not each country for itself, but Europe-wide from the start.

Eastern Europe's *realpolitik*-based socialist systems are breaking down and a time of peaceful revolutionary change has come to East Germany. The ecological policies and social change that I have so long hoped for seem a real possibility. I could weep for the fact that the revolution always starts elsewhere, never here. But the GDR is still a long way from being a revolutionary's paradise.●

Charles' Human Face

How unfortunate that your letters from Mark Fisher and Janet Abrams (*MT* November) should be such travesties. Prince Charles does not expect our architects to 'mimic the styles of the past', and if he is dogmatic, then his dogma contains three premises: firstly, that architecture should respect the past; secondly, that it should respect its locality; thirdly, that it should respect human concerns.

Respecting the past does not involve mimicry. To an extent, we expect the great artists and architects to rebel against what has gone before; the great Baroque painters like Caravaggio rebelled against Mannerism, but Caravaggio had been trained as a Mannerist and thus understood what it was he was reacting to. Today's architects have not been trained to understand classicism or the Baroque, however, and are thus incapable of rivalling such masterpieces as the National Gallery or the Glasgow City Chambers.

Respecting the locality means building in local materials and according to local practice. It does not rule out the possibility of innovation, although it may restrict it. After all, a hotel in the Scillies has little choice but to resemble a row of fishermen's cottages when little other architecture is to be seen on its shorelines. What it ensures, however, is that architectural eyesores will be virtually eliminated.

Human concerns apparently have the support of both Mr Fisher and Ms Abrams, but neither are very convincing. For an obvious example, compare the behaviour of British football fans on their windswept terraces with that of American baseball fans in their luxurious all-seater stadia. Treat people like animals, and that is how they will behave. How can Mark Fisher have such confidence in today's architects when they insist on making people work in soul-destroying skyscrapers which in a fire would be about as safe as the escalators at King's Cross underground station?

Mark Fisher blames capitalism for our architectural malaise, but is again unconvincing. Of course the Department of the Environment is a 'poodle for developers', but the real enemy is individual greed. Just as developers are now making their fortunes by ravag-

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ing the home counties, so did Harold Wilson's government force large numbers of people to live in inhuman tower blocks as a result of being niggardly with public expenditure. Prince Charles consistently advocates putting human interests before financial ones, and he speaks as a leading capitalist – in fact as one of the nation's 10 highest-paid executives. His proposals for a village near Maiden Castle stand as testimony to the acceptable face of both architecture and capitalism today.●
Quentin Hawkins, Aberdeen

Practical Times

The content of *MT* has always been stimulating with contributions from a wide range of persepctives. However, the momentum which *Facing Up To The Future* initiated in 1988 seems to have been restricted by a commitment to generalities rather than to the development of specific policies.

Given the peculiar nature of British cultural influence over the political, economic and social spheres, fundamental changes will only occur when radical ideas and alternatives to current structures are promoted with vigour and debate is opened up to all levels of society. Nowhere in *MT* is there a detailed discussion of alternative economic models and structures, alternative political systems, ways of achieving increased levels of social justice, or proposals to harness the benefits of technology for the increased utility of all.

The challenge of the 1990s is a practical one. Our detractors charge us with having no viable alternative to either capitalism or the free-market economy. *MT* is possibly the single most influential publication on the left today and its failure to meet this accusation head-on could be construed as an implied admission of defeat. Economists such as Herman Daly and Manfred Maxneef are now formulating the bases of alternative structures. In addition there is no shortage of ideas emerging from the universities.

It must surely be time to widen the debate, deal with practical problems and invite both readers and outside contributors to develop radical, workable models to replace those which cause the inequalities and exploitation which we all seek to banish.●
P Jeffrey, Herts

East Meets West

New Conversations

I felt a pang of self-recognition in John Lloyd's article on Eastern Europe (*MT* October). The East's reform process, he says, so clearly plays to the Western Right. What are the possibilities for a viable left position in these societies now 'emerging from a certain kind of leftism which in many of their citizens' eyes discredits all others'?

I have recently come back from Vienna where I spent a long weekend immersed in the conversation for which I have waited 30 years: with a Soviet woman, new friend, a social scientist like me. We were mapping out all that untrodden ground between us on to which she steps in her journey from a rigid and impoverished East, me towards her from a glutted and exploitative West.

At every turn in this long-desired conversation the pitfalls yawn open. She is tense with the anxiety that I may not be ready to believe her when she describes how repressive her life has been. That I won't acknowledge the lies she's been fed, the two cramped rooms where she is trapped with her mother, husband and child. She knows I call myself a socialist. 'Yes, but what do you *mean* exactly by socialism?' she asks warily. 'Don't look in *our* direction!'

For my part I am tense with the fear that she is speeding right past me into the embrace of my political enemies. A Thatcherite consumerism seems wonderful when you've bunions on your feet from a lifetime of Russian shoes. 'Yes, but,' I answer anxiously, 'What do you *mean* exactly by the free market?' We are appalled by what we see as each other's political naiveties.

This conversation is repeating itself thousands of times as each of us meets our Eastern counterpart in the new mobility of glasnost. It is wonderful, scary terrain on which genuinely fresh progressive politics has to be invented, based on real listening.●
Cynthia Cockburn, London

Advance Warning

While John Lloyd worries about how left distrust of the market will fare in Eastern Europe (*MT* October), we should let the Poles and others know just where they might end up. We're living there. Under the jealous god Market, with its waste of our limited resources in the regardless pursuit of individual profit, its unemployed poverty and wage-slavery, boom and bust, bankruptcy and monopoly, costly advertising bullshit and overproduction for the rich world, social disintegration and ecological crisis; egoism, aggression, frustration, exhaustion and ignorance; degradation of all human capacities and exploitation in all forms of relationship; the war of all against all and the ascent of the few over the many.

I wish the Easterners' needs (individual and social) well under the erratic tyranny of the undetermined market. But perhaps they know that this isn't their sole option, and it's just a few communist entrepreneurs and John Lloyd who need to be told that co-operation is the best future for the majority of us and for the planet.●
Mike Belbin, London

Nick Newman

Relative Attractions

Charlie Leadbeater's 'Boomtown Blues' (*MT* October) seemed to be yet another example of *Marxism Today*'s proclivity to contemplate the English south-eastern navel, but it made some compelling reading for all that.

The south east seems to have become a rat-trap as well as a rat-race, and suddenly living in the culture capital of Europe seems worth the sacrifice of a few degrees of annual average temperature.

And yet I still have doubts, even with the comforting knowledge that a Porsche gets stuck in a traffic jam for just as long as a Lada. *Our* jobs were, after all, lost as a consequence of *your* votes, and that is the way it will remain while there is the present apparently irreconcilable conflict between the British state and Scottish civil society.

After watching the Labour Party at Brighton it is fairly obvious there are names such as Kinnock, Gould, Dewar *et al* among your readership who, despite occasional rhetoric to the contrary, are centralists to the last political fibre.

Not to worry: perhaps by the time things become totally suffocating down there we will be in a position to go in for a second-hand wall to keep you lot out, lest you succumb to the temptation to come up and relax among the glorious spaces of empty shipyards, or climb mountains in order to get even more magnificent views of nuclear bases.●
Alan Clayton, Glasgow

Half A Loaf

Paul Morley is the best thing since sliced, white bread. Come to think of it, he's the *only* thing since sliced, white bread to be composed entirely of additives. The Minogue motif is wearing a bit thin though. And please *don't* take any notice of Chris Tarrant's proposal to re-name *MT noise, density and internment monthly*. Beam me up Kylie!●
Simon Barrow, London

Editorial Note:

We welcome your letters to add to discussion. Please send them to *MT* Letters, 16 St John Street, London EC1M 4AY. Brevity means you are more likely to be published. We reserve the right to cut.●

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Love On The Rocks

Cultural historian, **Shere Hite**, talks to *Rosalind Brunt* about the best-selling *Hite Reports* on sexual and emotional relationships

Shere Hite was born and grew up in the American Midwest. She studied as a cultural historian at Columbia University, New York, doing postgraduate work on the history of Western thought since the Enlightenment. This research, and her involvement in the women's movement in the States, gave the original impetus for her project on sexuality which she has been involved in since 1972. During that period, she has produced the major trilogy of *Hite Reports*, all based on a large survey sample of detailed written responses to questionnaires. Her latest book, written with Kate Colleran, is *Good Guys, Bad Guys And Other Lovers* (Pandora, 1989), an advice book for younger women based on the findings of the earlier reports. Shere Hite has recently married a musician, Friedrich Höricke. She lives in Paris. This interview is based on a conversation which took place at the new times event in London in October.

Could we start by talking about some of the books you've produced? The first one we had in this country was *Sexual Honesty* in 1974, which I assume was a sort of pilot study.

I started doing research in 1972 when I was involved in the women's movement in New York. First, some friends and I thought that we would have a conference about sexuality and a speak-out. Then we decided that nobody would speak out on such a personal matter, so I decided to do it in the form of a written questionnaire. The women's movement was doing quite well by 1976 but there wasn't a lot of discussion of sexuality, nor were there books on feminism marketed as mainstream.

Masters and Johnson had said that in their observations in the laboratory all women's orgasms involved clitoral stimulation, but then they published a further work in which they said, 'Ha! Ha! Catch-22' even though they had said that women should get enough indirect clitoral stimulation during simple 'thrusting' (which is a sexist word, why not call it 'penile covering'?) ... anyway, now they were saying that women should get enough indirect clitoral stimulation during regular coitus to have an orgasm and if they didn't then they have a 'secondary sexual dysfunction' and should go for treatment.

That was the background against which women in the women's movement which I was involved in were discussing their personal lives, while working on public issues like equal pay. So, we weren't going to talk to each other about things like, 'How we had an orgasm'. But we would talk about our feelings.

By the way, the title of that first book, *Sexual Honesty*, was chosen by the publisher. I have always hated it because it implied that women don't tell the truth sexually. The book was an anthology which included 35 original replies to the questionnaire, which in themselves were very meaningful. Eventually, I collected over 3,500 replies and in 1976, four years later, I published the results as *The Hite Report*.

When I was looking back at the first *Hite Report* on female sexuality, what struck me, 13 years later, was that where it starts is with masturbation and orgasm – obviously making a very important polemical intervention about independent and autonomous sexuality – and where it ends is with women saying that what they want is 'tons of kissing' and exchanging sexual glances.

I think it's interesting to look at where your books start and where they end, because ending on kissing and erotic encounters is a very different place from your primarily 'genital' starting point.

There was a big battle with the publisher because I wanted to put masturbation first. I kept saying that you can't put anything else first and they said that everyone would be turned off by it: 'Who is going to read a book whose first chapter is masturbation, urghh!' That is literally what they said to me. There is still no other book that I am aware of that documents different types of masturbation for women. People just ignore this topic. It is such an important body of data because it does show how easily women have orgasm.

But the publishers insisted that there had been too many books on sex, so they published 4,000 copies which is nothing in the United States. I didn't have any leverage with them whatsoever. The person who I was going out with at the time said that this was ridiculous, that we should have a press conference, and we did organise a press conference ourselves at which I said that, based on this study, it seemed more 'normal' for women not to have orgasm during simple intercourse.

But instead of wondering why women had a problem having orgasms, the question should be rather, 'Why does society have a problem accepting the way that women do orgasm?' During self-stimulation women can have orgasm so easily, so why not celebrate that and say: 'Isn't that great, isn't this wonderful. Women can do this with another person or alone.' There is nothing wrong with women, which people had been saying ad nauseum.

So I got the first chapter to be masturbation. But then, logically, the last chapter could have been sexual slavery, which is in fact chapter six. I think maybe it was easier for people in general to take the findings of the book at that time, not having it end on a difficult note but rather on a hopeful note. There was a long part towards the end towards questioning the definition of sex, and saying that it is a cultural and not a biological definition.

You talk about 'redefining' female sexuality.

Yes. It was supposed to be towards *un*-defining, but the publisher refused and said that there is no such word as 'undefining'. I said that 'redefining' is not right because we don't want just one definition. Finally in the editing they put it back to 'redefining'. I couldn't believe it.

Where you end that first book, with nurturing relationships and eroticism, becomes very much your later preoccupation. Your later work is not so directly about genital sexuality. Then you go on and 'do' men. What struck me about your next book *Male Sexuality*, published in 1981, was that you are not so engaged in it. There is not so much of you in there. And you don't start the book with men masturbating, so it's not like a parallel book. You start with cultural and social definitions of being a man. And at the end there are some histories of individual men but there is no

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redefining of men's sexuality.

I don't really agree with that. The whole book, in questioning the centrality of intercourse to male sexuality, suggests a radical redefinition of male sexuality and, once again, I stress the theme that sexuality is defined by culture. The definition of sex as we know it is not a biological given and has not remained constant through time. What we have is a pro-natalist, or pro-reproductive, sexuality which is defined for us by our culture. There is a long essay on this subject in the middle section of the book. I had so many editorial battles about it that I had to hide it away again in the middle of the book.

But as you say, I make less comment in this book. In some sense I was less certain about commenting because I'm not a man. Also, I was in conflict with my publisher again. Some parts that I wanted to write, I had to argue to have them remain there. It was as if my perspective on who men are wasn't supposed to be important. We were trying to let men say it all. I compressed my basic analysis into this one long essay in the middle about the male ideology. And the critics immediately took that one essay and blasted it and never talked about any other part of the book.

They especially blasted that part which says that the whole Judeo-Christian tradition is very much focused on reproduction therefore it tells men that the best thing to do is to have intercourse with women. That is the only allowable definition of sex.

In *The Hite Report On Male Sexuality* I was trying to unravel all the mythology about masculinity. I asked men why they liked intercourse. Most men said it was because it feels good to be close: yet obviously they could be close in other ways. So does intercourse feel good to men primarily because that is what men are supposed to do? After all, in classical Greece most men had sex with other men. So why do most men now 'naturally' want intercourse with only women? Why is that the 'driving force'? I've thought about it so often in terms of the various Aids campaigns where there is rarely any discussion of why men are focused on penetration, it is assumed that it is a 'natural drive'.

I suppose what I meant about how it differs from the female sexuality book is that what you're dealing with in that book are points where you see women are already changing and you take that into account when you end with a redefinition called 'Toward A New Female Sexuality'. What I didn't get any sense of, and it may be because of the empirical reality, was where the points are where men are changing? It seems to me that you were telling men things and just hoping that they would take them up.

There is a problem about who the book is for, in a way. Is the male sexuality one for men in the same way that the female one

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was for women?
It was for men I'd say.

Although, isn't it true that it was mainly read by women?
Oh sure! Because men don't buy books like that. One thing that I found striking is that if you ask men a question about men – try this some time – they respond, 'I don't know.' I'd say, 'Why not?' 'Oh, I don't think I'm typical, I don't think I'm a typical man.' I think that most men underneath it all don't think that they're typical because the stereotypes are so rigid and so impossible and they also have a negative connotation in a way.

So although men would express a lot of things that they felt which might not have been typical, they still were not willing to make the statement that women were ready to make about wanting change. They would only want to fit in more or wonder why they didn't fit in more. After all how can men critique a system in which they are, supposedly, on top? And what can be better than being a man, because you can be a ruler, especially if you're white.

'Most men still see women as a vast available pool of love on every level'

But, at least empirically, the data itself formed a critique: the research showed that men actually do masturbate in ways that they don't talk about or share with women generally. That in male sexuality there is so much anal stimulation going on, that men do by themselves or as teenagers with other boys. That is generally left out of a lot of heterosexual sex and discussion.

Some of the most poignant parts were boys talking about growing up with their fathers or men talking about being boys and most said that they didn't really know their fathers. One said that he was a nice man but he never really knew much about him. I ended up feeling contrary to it being, 'mothers fault' that boys grow up, 'macho', that in fact the influence of a father who is not there was even more telling for most boys. Around the age of 12 they have to make some kind of decision based on sticking with the mother's value system or going with the male value system. Most chose to go with the male value system and most, I think, then felt guilty about 'deserting the mother' and then throughout their lives are ambivalent towards women. They feel they have betrayed them. They can't really be with them, they can't really be them, they have to be 'other' otherwise they won't fit into society. These kinds of things I felt were really important but none of it was discussed in the media.

When you come to the major work, *Women And Love: A Cultural Revolution In Progress*, that problem becomes very striking about men and women being out of kilter. What comes over very dramatically is that women seem to have changed in many ways and be on the move and men are stuck in emotional paralysis and don't seem to have shifted at all.
Originally, the idea of the book was to ask, if women have been defined basically as the nurturers of society, supposed to take care of children and men, what would it be like if this role were redefined? If we think of the many possible definitions, what would it be? In the early 70s, in the women's movement, a friend of mine Ti-Grace Atkinson and others were saying 'Love is an ideological construct in which women are taught to take care of men and change diapers'. Which is true. But at the same time I think that the women's movement lost a lot of members because women kept falling in love with men, including Ti-Grace, and this caused a big scandal! But people *do* fall in love.

I don't think that there is a 'natural' heterosexual attraction but sometimes there is an attraction between a woman and a man. But then in the women's movement it got so bad that even if a woman fell in love with a *woman* it was also bad because it was considered counter-revolutionary: that you were being carried away by unreal, imaginary Hollywood scenarios. So nobody was supposed to fall in love! That was when our membership got really small. People would come to meetings and not talk about private life any more, which took a lot of the life out of the whole movement.

So I thought it was very important to analyse private life and to ask if there is such a thing as love. And is it simply lust or is it caring for somebody? And are there other kinds of love? Emotional intensity? Are there different kinds which we don't have words for? That was the original impetus for doing the research.

The other impetus which I felt but couldn't put words to at that time was that I think that there is a big, foggy area of psychological discrimination which I've only made a stab at defining in *Women And Love*. It is an emotional inequality that blankets everything, it's built into the language.

Freud certainly had a lot to do with intensifying it. Some obvious examples of this are when labels are used for women, like 'neurotic', 'insecure' or if a woman complains, the reply: 'You must have picked the wrong man, maybe you are a masochist.' If a relationship breaks up they may say 'Oh, she must have been impossible to live with.' These kinds of stereotypes really haven't been challenged. Nevertheless, during the eight years of research, I saw a lot of change going on and that is why the subtitle is *A Cultural Revolution In Progress*. Women are in the process of trying to reformulate notions of female psychology. It seemed to me that women were changing even as I watched the answers coming in.

How would you characterise that change?
It had to do with the feeling of independence. The women's movement created a climate of female pride. One of the things that conservative and radical women might have in common at this moment is pride – 'I won't take any guff' – that kind of attitude. We are more aware now when discrimination is happening.

In 1947 Simone De Beauvoir wrote about women as 'the Other' in *The Second Sex*. She said that men see women as 'the Other'. And we saw ourselves as 'the Other', even in the women's movement, in the beginning of the 70s. It was almost like we, as a group, were knocking on the door of the 'big male world': 'Let us in, we'll show you we can do it just as good as you. We can run the government and corporations, we'll dress like you, talk like you and act like you. Then we'll all be equal.'

But as Martin Luther King said, equality isn't so simple, equality also means changing things. That is the argument that many of the feminists in the States have with Betty Friedan. It isn't just that we want an equal slice of the pie.

It seems to me that there is a big, foggy area which is keeping change from happening more quickly. It has to do with the emotional inequality that happens in private between a woman and a man. It has to do with the stereotypes, such as men thinking that 'women's issues' are trivial issues, that they belong in the home.

The cultural revolution is the fact that women have changed and gone beyond all that. In France 11m women are living on their own. That is half of the adult female population. In the USA, London and other places the majority of divorces are now brought by women. So women are basically leaving the family which was never democratised. During the 20th century women made many changes.

The first one was to get the vote and at the end of the century I think that all this lurid discussion about the family in the last 20 years with the headlines like 'So and so killed husband', 'Child was molested', has to do with this conflict over family politics. We have had a belief in democracy in government for about 200 years, but we never had it in the family. Now women are insisting on it or they're leaving the family. Many conservatives would do anything in the USA to prevent this happening. Look at the US Supreme Court abortion decision.

I'm very persuaded and I find very attractive your idea of men becoming 'emotionally equal' with women, and that it is women's values that men need to take on board. But I also read your latest report as a massive indictment of men and masculinity. It is so consistently awful, and I don't mean that at all polemically, you're demonstrating the size and scale of the problem. Women in

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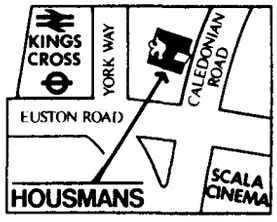

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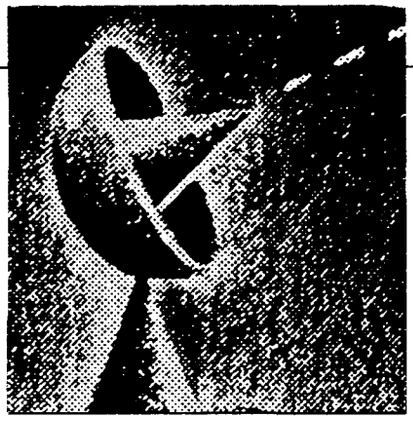

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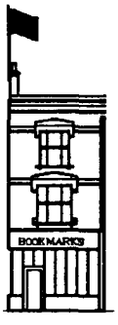

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the questionnaire are saying time and time again how awfully they are treated by men physically, emotionally, sexually – and what struck me very dramatically in reading your book was what a strange object of desire men are.

One of the most interesting things you say is that not only are women going on and on about the awfulness of men but they are still loving men. Now you reject the theory that women are masochists and you reject the idea of 'women loving too much'. You reject that forcefully and ask what is wrong with loving too much, and this is very positive.

But at the same time you've shown that heterosexual relations are so out of kilter, and you're also pointing to ways in which women are living without men. So what can be the appeal of men for women any more? I mean, isn't it interesting that women are still with men given that women are saying both, 'We love men' and 'They are awful'.

I think that one answer is the social pressure. While, truly, people do meet and fall in love, on the other hand many others get together simply due to the social pressure. I tried to document that. As I said earlier, in classical Greece most men had sex with other men. Women were at home with other women (and of course nobody knows what they were doing at home!).

From the first time you open your eyes there is pressure to think in terms of, 'Oh, you grow up and fall in love with somebody of the opposite sex,' and that is the scenario for your life. I think if you have sexual feelings for an inappropriate object then you experience those as an enthusiasm for that, you know, dog, friend, whatever. And on the other hand if it is the opposite sex you experience that as 'a date'.

Basically, this all reflects a society in which women have had no status without men. If a man doesn't love you, you're nothing. Do you think that there is another reason?

'Women have changed and this is so widespread that it's shocking and it's picking up steam all of the time'

Well, yes, I think there must be, otherwise you are saying women are rather victims in this situation, whereas women are changing a lot of those things you mention.

Yes, but, statistically, the majority of women live half their adult lives on their own, if you count from age 18 until death. Then there's the fact that the majority of divorces are brought by women. In my study I said 91%, then in England they came out with 84% – I don't know if you saw it a few months back – and in the States they came out with 74%. It's still a majority.

And nobody had done anything with these statistics, believe it or not. So I don't think that women are making irrational decisions and I don't think that women are masochists for trying to live with men. In the beginning it's presented to them as a beautiful thing. In the beginning most men are not doing the kind of put-downs that they might do later. But the language that we have for discussing relationships is so limited.

What I tried to give women was a kind of power within a relationship with a man. The typical scenario is one in which, well, in the beginning everything is pretty good and then there start to be problems, one of which is frequently that the woman feels the man doesn't talk enough about anything besides exterior events.

And she'll say, 'You know, I wish you'd talk to me more.' Then he'll wind up saying, 'Don't bother me, everything's fine. I'm fine, what's wrong?' And she'll say, 'Well, not everything is fine with me because I don't feel close to you because you never talk to me.' Then he finally says after a few months of that, 'Stop nagging me, everything's fine.' Then she feels bad because she's now been placed in the category of 'nag'. There's a tape going on in the back of her head saying that she's the nag.

These arguments usually happen in the middle of the night, there's nobody there but the man and the woman. The whole power of this society is behind the man using that kind of language and the worst forms of it are something like, 'You know, you're being irrational, when you get hold of yourself I'll talk to you.' The typical pattern as I discovered in my research is that, he sits there and gets quieter and quieter with long-suffering looks at the ceiling. This only makes the woman more angry because what she really wants is the closeness they had in the beginning and so she may start screaming.

Women said that they start most fights in order to 'bring up the issues'. They wait until they think it's a good moment and try to bring it up, and then they don't usually get a very good response from the man. And the man'll say, 'But, you know, there's nothing wrong, I'm fine, and when you eventually get hold of yourself then I'll talk to you, you're being irrational,' or, the really mean, 'What's the matter, got your period today?'

All of that is the undiscussed area of emotional relationships. It's the real condescension to women, it's the real keeping women in their place, it's the last barrier, in a way, for women, because women are then faced with the choice: either I stay and I put up with this kind of junk or else I leave. There doesn't seem to be an in-between.

And no matter which the woman does, she's in a bad situation. If she stays, and psychologically decides not to care and leads a double life psychologically, caring more about her job or her friends or whatever, it's hard on her because she still has this emotional drain all the time. On the other hand, if she leaves she'll probably get into the poverty category.

The 'feminisation of poverty' in the United States is caused, I believe, by a lot more women leaving bad situations, preferring to be poor. So I think that new language should be developed and I think that's one of the new times issues. What are the kinds of words that could be used to describe what goes on in those relationships in the middle of the night? What is happening?

I don't think a lot of men have realised how they have the power vocabulary. We don't. I mean there are the words for women: nag, bitch, and all of that. But what can we call a man? Macho? Macho's half a compliment! It's really a problem. As you said, it's a massive indictment, because I think that in private relationships this does go on. I think most men still see women as a vast available pool of love on every level.

You talk about revolutionary road maps, you talk about a cultural revolution, but I still can't see who are the agents of change here. What is going to make men, or who is going to make men, behave differently? Is it reading books? I can't quite see how the cultural revolution happens in ways that change men.

It depends on where you think power lies. If there is no power except for financial power or governmental power, then, yes, until we 'change men', which has always been our role, after all, to be those who try to fix it all, or until men decide by some spontaneous reason, namely the greenhouse effect scares them or something, to change, then we won't have change.

But the fact is, and what I think is so interesting, is that women have changed. And women are more than half the population. That is a cultural revolution even if men don't change. Women have changed, and I think that this is so widespread that it's shocking, and it's also picking up steam all the time.

At the end of the 20th century, we've had this battle over democratising the family and finally, if it's not going to allow us to have any dignity or any pride, we're leaving the family. Woman after woman, and I've been in lots of countries discussing this, says, ok, so the world doesn't revolve around a man any more, it would be fun to be in love, but it just doesn't matter that much. My life matters more and there are things which make me as happy. This is a major change and it's very recent.

In France 25 years ago women couldn't even have their own bank account without their husband's signature, and now 11m are living on their own. This is a huge change, and so, what if men never change? I'm more fascinated by the fact that *women* have changed, and I think are making great strides in all kinds of directions, and I see that continuing. ●

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Stuart Briers

Global Times

Some speak of the local. But what is really happening is the era of globalisation, with new worldwide companies to the fore. The cultural and economic implications are enormous. **Kevin Robins** explains why

World space is the field in which our epoch is created.
Henri Lefebvre

Times are seen as changing. But just how much are they really changing? And what is the process of change all about? For many, what is really new about these times is a renaissance of localities and of localism. There has, for example, been a great surge of interest recently in local economies and localised production complexes – the 'Third Italy' the 'Second Denmark', the industrial districts of Baden-Württemberg in West Germany, Sakaki in Japan, or Oyonnax in France. The influential 'flexible specialisation' thesis developed by Michael Piore and Charles Sabel in *The Second Industrial Divide* has drawn attention to the similarities between these closely-knit networks of small firms and the strongly-localised industrial districts of 19th-century Sheffield and south-east Lancashire described by the economist Alfred Marshall at the turn of the century. Crucial to the renewed success of the industrial district in the late 20th century, they argue, are strong local institutions and infrastructures: relations of trust based on face-to-face contact; a 'productive community' historically rooted in a particular place; a strong sense of local pride and allegiance.

But localism is about far more than a new industrial dynamic and strategy. It reflects a broader and more pervasive mood of the times. Thus, the 'struggle for place' is at the heart of much contemporary concern with urban regeneration and the built environment. Prince Charles' crusade on behalf of community architecture and classical revivalism is the most prominent and influential example. There is a strong sense that modernist planning was associated with universalising and abstract tendencies, while postmodernism is about drawing upon the sense of place, about revalidating and revitalising the

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local and the particular. A neo-Romantic fascination with traditional and vernacular motifs is supposedly about the re-enchantment of the city.

This cultural localism reflects, in turn, deeper feelings about the inscription of human lives and identities in space and time. There is a growing interest in the embeddedness of life-histories within the boundaries of place, and with the continuities of identity and community through local memory and heritage. Witness the enormous popularity of the Catherine Cookson heritage trail in South Tyneside, of 'a whole day of nostalgia' at Beamish in County Durham, or of Wigan Pier's evocation of 'the way we were'. If modernity created an abstract and universal sense of self, then postmodernity will be about a sense of identity rooted in the particularity of place.

The inevitable consequence of the 'small is beautiful' emphasis of this new localism is an overdrawn contrast between historical epochs. It is suggested that we are now experiencing an abrupt and decisive shift from one historical epoch to another: from an era shaped by the forces of abstraction and universalisation to one characterised by a new particularism and localism. Reality is more complex, however, and is not captured by this kind of historical binarism. The preoccupation with localism obscures, rather than reveals, the nature of the contemporary restructuring process. The most significant expression of this restructuring process is – to make a polemical contrast – the escalating logic of *globalisation*. This logic has repercussions at all geographical levels, but what seems to be emerging is the centrality of a new global-local nexus. The new localism is a partial recognition of this development. It contains a half-truth. What it does not recognise or acknowledge is that the global dynamic is decisive. These are global times.

Historical capitalism has, of course, always strained to become a world system. The perpetual quest to maximise accumulation has always compelled geographical expansion in search of new markets, raw materials, sources of cheap labour and so on. The histories of trade and migration, of missionary and military conquest, of imperialism and neo-imperialism, mark the various strategies and stages that have, by the late-20th century, made capitalism a truly global force.

If this process has brought about the organisation of production and the control of markets on a world scale, it has also, of course, had profound political and cultural consequences. For all that it has projected itself as trans-historical and transnational, as the transcendent and universalising force of modernisation and modernity, global capitalism has in reality been about Westernisation – the export of Western commodities, values, priorities, ways of life. In a process of unequal cultural encounter, 'foreign' populations have been compelled to be the subjects and subalterns of Western empire while, no less significantly, Europe has come face to face with the 'alien' and 'exotic' culture of its 'Other'. Globalisation, as it dissolves the barriers of distance, makes the encounter of colonial centre and colonised periphery immediate and intense.

What is globalisation? In the economic sphere, it is about the organisation of production and the exploitation of markets on a world scale. This is, of course, not a new development. Since at least the time of the East India Company, it has been at the heart of entrepreneurial dreams and aspirations. What we are seeing is no more than the greater realisation of long historical trends towards the global concentration of industrial and financial capital. Multinational corporations remain the key shapers and shakers of the inter-national economy, and it is the ever-more extensive and intensive integration of their activities that is the primary dynamic of the globalisation process. Despite the recent resurgence of 'small is beautiful' rhetoric it remains the case, more than ever, that 'size is power'. What we are seeing is the continuation of a constant striving to overcome national boundaries, to capture and co-ordinate critical inputs and to achieve world-scale advantages.

But if this process is clearly about the consolidation of corporate command and control, it is nonetheless the case that, to this end, we are now seeing significant transformations and innovations in corporate strategy and organisation. According to the chairman of General Electric Corporation, 'The challenge is to be able to combine the large corporation's resources and reach with the small company's simplicity and agility.'

The limitations of nationally-centred multinationals are now becoming clear, and leading-edge companies like Procter and Gamble, Hewlett-Packard, Matsushita, NEC or Electrolux are now restructuring themselves as 'flexible transnationals' on the basis of a philosophy and practice of globalisation. These companies must now operate and compete in the world arena in terms of quality, efficiency, product variety, and the close understanding of markets. And they must now operate in all markets simultaneously, rather than sequentially. Global corporations are increasingly involved in time-based competition: they must shorten the innovation cycle, cut seconds from process time in the factory, accelerate distribution and consumption times. Global competition pushes towards time-space compression.

Globalisation is also about the emergence of the decentred or polycentric corporation. As business consultant Kenichi Ohmae suggests, global operations require a genuine 'equidistance of perspective', treating all strategic markets in the same way, with the same attention as the home market. He sees Honda, operating in Japan, Europe and North America, as a typical case: 'Its managers do not think or act as if the company were divided between Japanese and overseas operations. Indeed, the very word overseas has no place in Honda's vocabulary because the corporation sees itself as equidistant from all its key customers.'

'In the new cultural industries there is a belief in the convergence of lifestyle, culture and behaviour among consumer segments across the world'

This whole process has been associated with a corporate philosophy centred around the 'global product'. A universalising idea of consumer sovereignty suggests that as people gain access to global information, so they develop global needs and demand global commodities, thereby becoming 'global citizens'. In his book *The Marketing Imagination* the pioneer of this approach, Theodore Levitt, forcefully argues that the new reality is all about global markets and world-standard products. This is, of course, no more than a continuation of mass-production strategies which always sought economies of scale on the basis of expanding markets. However, while the old multinational corporation did this by operating in a number of countries and by adapting its products to national preferences, today's global corporation operates 'as if the entire world (or major regions of it) were a single, largely identical entity; it does and sells the same things in the same single way everywhere'. Transcending vestigial national differences, the global corporation 'strives to treat the world as fewer standardised markets rather than as many customised markets'.

Of course, there is both hype and hyperbole in this. There has been a tendency to overemphasise the standardisation of products and the homogenisation of tastes. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to dismiss this globalising vision as simply another empty fad or fashion of the advertising industry. Levitt's position is in fact more complex and nuanced than is generally understood. He recognises that global corporations do indeed acknowledge differentiated markets and customise for specific market segments. The point, however, is that this is combined with the search for opportunities to sell to similar segments throughout the globe.

These same insights have been taken up in Saatchi and Saatchi's strategies for pan-regional and world marketing. Their well-known maxim that there are more social differences between midtown Manhattan and the Bronx than between Manhattan and the 7th Arrondissement of Paris, suggests the increasing importance of targeting consumers on the basis of demography and habits rather than geographical proximity. Marketing strategies are 'consumer-driven' instead of 'geography-driven'. What is at the heart of this economic logic of world brands remains the overriding need to achieve economies of scale, or, more accurately, to achieve both scale and scope economies – that is, to combine volume and variety pro-

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duction at the global scale.

Globalisation also demands considerable changes in corporate behaviour: the flexible transnational must compete in ways that are significantly different from the older multinational firm. In a world of permanent and continuous innovation, a world in which costs must be recovered over a much larger market base, a world in which global span must be combined with rapid, even instantaneous, response, the global corporation must be lean and resourceful. In order to ensure its competitive position it must ensure a global presence: it must be 'everywhere at once'. This is bringing about significant changes in corporate strategy, with a huge burst of activity centred around mergers, acquisitions, joint ventures, alliances, inter-firm agreements and collaborative activities of various kinds. The objective is to combine mobility and flexibility with the control and integration of activities on a world scale.

'Now it is the turn of African music, Thai cuisine and Aboriginal painting to be absorbed into the world market'

Strategic alliances between companies have become an increasingly valued means to achieve this dual objective. Thus, to take the single example of the automobile industry, General Motors has developed an alliance with Toyota, Rover and Honda are jointly involved in design and product development, Nissan and Volkswagen market each other's products, Mazda and Ford have worked out a marketing agreement. In a global environment few companies have the resources to function across all markets, and it becomes necessary to call upon the expertise of others in the areas of research, design or marketing. In Ohmae's words, 'In a world of imperfect options, alliances are often the fastest, least risky, and most profitable way to go global.' Through this form of agreement the global corporation seeks to position itself within a 'tight-loose' network: tight enough to ensure predictability and stability in dealings with external collaborators; loose enough to ensure manoeuvrability, and even reversibility, to permit the redirection of activities and the redrawing of organisational boundaries when necessary.

The emergence of this global economic field has been associated with the creation of what might be called a new and global 'electronic space' or 'electronic geography'. It is only on the basis of new information and communications technologies that truly global corporate operations have now become viable. Computer-communications systems are fundamental to both the co-ordination of internal corporate activities and functions and to the control of external transactions with suppliers, collaborators or customers. Only through the establishment of these information networks, of a new and global communications infrastructure, has it been possible to overcome the time and space barriers to corporate expansion. The global corporation is essentially a 'network corporation'; its coherence and integration are organised around the circulation of information and communication, around what has been called a global 'space of flows'.

These information grids have been described as the new 'electronic highways' of the information society. What must be recognised, however, is that they are being developed by global corporations as private and proprietary systems, available only to a restricted group of end-users. They are private roads, rather than open thoroughfares. Through the new satellite, cable and microwave links, we are seeing the growth of 'customer-specific' and 'dedicated' that is, closed networks and services. This is the new infrastructure that underpins the globalisation process, the infrastructure upon which new corporate monopolies and empires are being built across the world arena.

The historical development of capitalist economies has always had profound implications for cultures, identities and ways of life. The globalisation of economic activity is now associated with further cultural transformation. We can talk of a process of cultural globalisation.

What, then, is the nature of this process? At one level, it is about the manufacture of universal cultural products – a process which has, of course, been developing for a long time. In the new cultural industries, there is a belief – to use Saatchi terminology – in 'world cultural convergence'; a belief in the convergence of lifestyle, culture and behaviour among consumer segments across the world. This faith in the emergence of a 'shared culture' and a common 'world awareness' appears to be vindicated by the success of products like *Dallas* or *Batman* and by attractions like Disneyland. According to the president of the new Euro-Disneyland, 'Disney's characters are universal'. 'You try and convince an Italian child,' he challenges, 'that Topolino – the Italian name for Mickey Mouse – is American.'

As in the wider economy, global standardisation reflects, of course, the drive to achieve ever-greater economies of scale. More precisely, it is about achieving both scale and scope economies (volume combined with variety) by targeting the shared habits and tastes of particular market segments at the global level, rather than by marketing, on the basis of geographical proximity, to different national audiences. The global cultural industries are increasingly driven to cover their escalating costs over the maximum market base, over pan-regional and world markets. They are driven by the very same globalising logic that is reshaping the economy as a whole.

The new merchants of universal culture aspire towards a borderless world. The likes of Sky and BSB beam out their products to a world without frontiers; satellite footprints spill over the former integrity of national territories. With the globalisation of culture, the link between culture and territory is more disrupted. What is being created is a new electronic cultural space, a 'placeless' geography of image and simulation. The formation of this global hyperspace is reflected in that strand of post-modernist thinking associated particularly with writers like Baudrillard and Virilio. Baudrillard, for example, invokes the vertigo, the disorientation, the delirium created by a world of flows and images and screens. This new global arena of culture is a world of instantaneous and depthless communication, a world in which space and time horizons have become compressed and collapsed.

The creators of this universal cultural space are the new global cultural corporations. In an environment of enormous opportunities and escalating costs, what is clearer than ever before is the relation between size and power. What we are seeing in the cultural industries is a recognition of the advantages of scale, and in this sphere too it is giving rise to an explosion of mergers, acquisitions and strategic alliances. The most dynamic actors are rapidly restructuring to ensure strategic control of a range of cultural products across world markets. America's largest broadcasting company, NBC, is now, in the words of its vice-president, keenly 'developing global partnerships' and 'encouraging those companies in Europe and Japan who are interested in working in a partnered or allied way'.

The most prominent example of conglomerate activity is Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, which has rapidly moved from its base in newspapers into the audiovisual sector. Through the acquisition of Fox Broadcasting, 20th Century Fox and Sky Channel, an (eventually unsuccessful) attempt at a joint venture with Disney, and now a renewed interest in the acquisition of MGM/UA, Murdoch is striving to become involved at all levels of the value chain.

The most symbolic example of a global media conglomerate, however, is Sony, which is now, according to *Newsweek* magazine, 'buying a part of America's soul'. From its original involvement in consumer electronic hardware, Sony has now diversified into cultural software through the recent acquisitions of CBS and Columbia Pictures. The Sony-Columbia-CBS combination creates a communications giant, a 'total entertainment business', with combined revenues of over $20 billion. The long-term strategy is to use this control over both hardware and software industries to dominate markets for the next generation of audiovisual products.

What is prefigurative about both News International and Sony is not simply their scale and reach, but also the fact that they aspire to be stateless, 'headless', decentred corporations. These global cultural industries understand the importance of achieving a real equidistance, or equipresence, of perspective in relation to the whole world of their audiences and consumers.

If the origination of world-standardised

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cultural products is one key strategy, the process of globalisation is, in fact, more complex and diverse. In reality, it is not possible to eradicate or transcend difference. Here too the principle of equidistance prevails: the resourceful global conglomerate exploits local difference and particularity. Cultural products are assembled from all over the world and turned into commodities for a new 'cosmopolitan' marketplace: world music and tourism; ethnic arts, fashion and cuisine; Third World writing and cinema. The local and 'exotic' are torn out of place and time to be repackaged for the world bazaar.

'If localities do now increasingly bypass the national state to deal directly with global corporations, they do not do so on equal terms'

So-called world culture may reflect a new valuation of difference and particularity, but it is also very much about making a profit from it. Theodore Levitt explains this globalisation of ethnicity. The global growth of ethnic markets, he suggests, is an example of the global standardisation of segments: 'Everywhere there is Chinese food, pitta bread, country and western music, pizza and jazz. The global pervasiveness of ethnic forms represents the cosmopolitanisation of speciality. Again, globalisation does not mean the end of segments. It means, instead, their expansion to worldwide proportions.' Now it is the turn of African music, Thai cuisine, Aboriginal painting and so on, to be absorbed into the world market and to become cosmopolitan specialities.

Jean-Hubert Martin's recent exhibition at the Pompidou Centre, *Magiciens de la Terre*, is an interesting and significant barometer, in the world of high art, of this new climate of cultural globalisation. In this exhibition, Martin assembles original works by one hundred artists from all over the world: from the major artistic centres of Europe and America, but also from the 'margins' of Haiti, Nepal, Zaire and Madagascar. Where the discourse of high art converges with that of ethnography, the work of the Euro-American avant-garde is contiguous with that of Third-World 'primitives'. Hubert's aim in developing 'the truly international exhibition of world-wide contemporary art' was to question the 'false distinction' between Western cultures and other cultures, to 'show the real difference and the specificity of the different cultures' and to 'create a dialogue' between Western and other cultures. *Magiciens de la Terre* brings 'world art' into being. Artistic texts and artifacts are pulled out of their original contexts and then reinserted and reinterpreted in a new global context. The global museum is a decentred space: Hubert cultivates an 'equidistance of perspective' in which each exhibit, in equal dialogue with the rest, is valued for its difference and specificity.

What is the significance and achievement of *Magiciens de la Terre*? Is there something more to it than simply absorbing new products into the international art market? Why does it resonate so much with the times? Well, at one level the project is genuinely exciting and challenging. This kind of cosmopolitanism is to be preferred to parochialism and insularity. There is indeed an immediate pleasure and exhilaration in seeing such a juxtaposition of diverse and vibrant cultures. But the exhibition touches deeper and darker chords. In its preoccupation with 'magic' and the 'spirituality' of Third-World art, *Magiciens de la Terre* seeks to expose a certain emptiness, a spiritual vacuum, in Western culture.

There is, of course, something very suspect and problematical about this Western idealisation of 'primitiveness' and 'purity', this romance of the 'Other'. The exhibition in no way confronts or handles this inadequacy. Nonetheless, even if there is no resolution, it does pose important questions about the nature of cultural identity and about its relation to 'Otherness'. How do we now define ourselves as Western? And how does this Western identity relate to 'other', non-Western, identities in the world?

If the global collection and circulation of artistic products has been responsible for new kinds of encounter and collision between cultures, there have also been more direct and immediate exchanges and confrontations. The long history of colonialism and imperialism has brought large populations of migrants and refugees from the Third to the First World. Whereas Europe once addressed African and Asian cultures across vast distances, now that 'Other' has installed itself within the very heart of the Western metropolis. Through a kind of reverse invasion, the periphery has infiltrated the colonial core. The protective filters of time and space have disappeared, and the encounter with the 'alien' and 'exotic' is now instantaneous and immediate. The Western city has become a crucible in which world cultures are brought into direct contact. Through this implosion of empire, the certain and centred perspective of the old colonial order is confounded and confused.

As cultures have come to interface directly with each other, older certainties and hierarchies of identity have consequently been called into question. Of course, they do not disappear. Cultural nationalism and patriotism are always poised to reassert themselves in a storm of jingoism and xenophobia. Little Englandism has become a force to be reckoned with. Nonetheless, in a country that is now a container of African and Asian cultures, the sense of what it is to be English can never again have the old confidence and surety.

Other sources of identity are no less fragile. What does it mean to be European in a continent coloured not only by the cultures of its former colonies, but also by American and now Japanese cultures? Is not the very category of identity itself problematical? Is it at all possible, in global times, to regain a coherent and integral sense of identity? Continuity and historicity of identity are challenged by the immediacy and intensity of global cultural confrontations. As Homi Bhabha has argued, 'Where once we could believe in the comforts and continuities of Tradition, today we must face the responsibilities of cultural Translation.' This is true for all cultures and identities.

Time and distance no longer mediate the encounter with 'other' cultures. This drama of globalisation is symbolised perfectly in the collision between Western 'liberalism' and Islamic 'fundamentalism' centred around the Rushdie affair. How do we cope with the shock of confrontation? What does the 'responsibility of Translation' exactly entail? This is perhaps the key political agenda in this era of space/time compression. One danger is that we retreat into fortress identities. Another is that, in the anxious search for secure and stable identities, we politicise those activities – religion, literature, philosophy – that should not be directly political. The responsibility of Translation means learning to listen to 'others' and learning to speak to, rather than for or about, 'others'.

That is easily said, of course, but not so easy to accomplish. Hierarchical orders of identity will not quickly disappear. Indeed, the very celebration and recognition of 'difference' and 'otherness' may itself conceal more subtle and insidious relations of power. When Hubert turns world art into a spectacle in *Magiciens de la Terre*, might this not simply represent a new and enhanced form of Western colonial appropriation and assimilation?

Globalisation is the awesome force shaping our times. These global times are about the compression of time and space horizons and the creation of a world of instantaneity and depthlessness. Global space is a space of flows, an electronic space, a decentred space, a space in which frontiers and boundaries have become permeable. Within this global arena economies and cultures are thrown into intense and immediate contact with each other – with each 'Other' (an 'Other' that is no longer simply 'out there' but also within).

It is globalisation that defines these times and not an emergent or re-emergent localism. Nonetheless, it is necessary to return again to our starting point and to now reconsider the significance of the local. If it has been necessary to emphasise processes of de-localisation, associated especially with the development of new information and communications networks, this should not be seen as an absolute tendency. The particularity of place and territory can never be done away with, can never be absolutely transcended. Globalisation is, in fact, also associated with new dynamics of *re*-localisation. It is about the achievement of a new *global-local nexus*, about new and intricate relations between global space and local space. In the words of the president of Nomura Securities of Japan, 'globalisation is like putting together a

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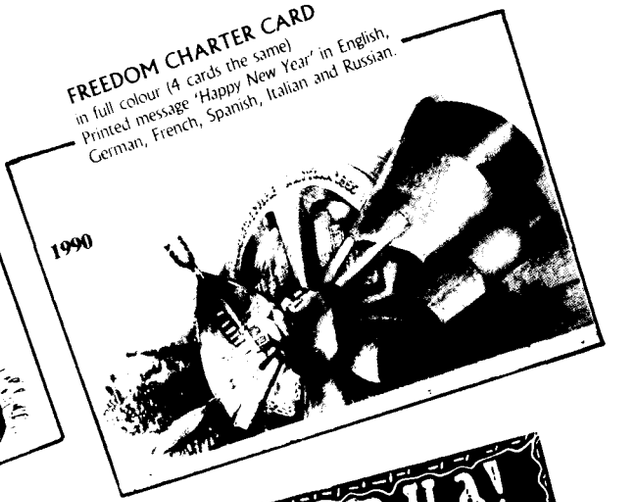

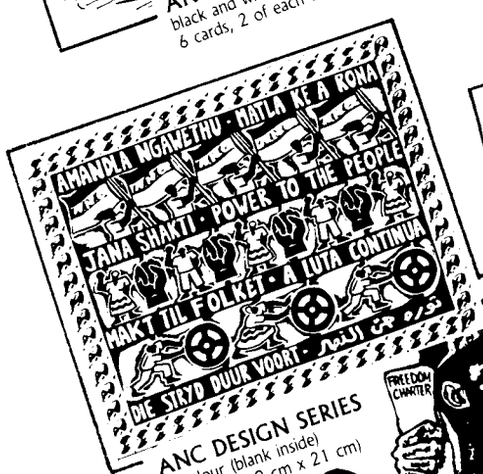

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jigsaw puzzle': it is a matter of inserting a multiplicity of localities into the overall picture of a new global system.

We should not invest our hopes for the future in the redemptive qualities of local economies, local cultures, local identities. The local is significant in the context of the emerging new global-local nexus, and we might perhaps describe the present period more appropriately as 'global-local times'. We should not idealise the local. It is important to see it as a relational, and relative, concept. And, if once it was significant in relation to the national sphere, now its meaning is being recast in the context of globalisation. For the global corporation, the global-local nexus is of key and strategic importance. According to Olivetti's Carlo de Benedetti, in the face of ever-higher development costs '*globalisation* is the only possible answer'. 'Marketers,' he continues, 'must sell the latest product everywhere at once and that means producing *locally*.'

'The Western city has become a crucible in which world cultures are brought into direct contact'

Similarly, the mighty Sony describes its operational strategy as 'global localisation'. NBC's vice-president, JB Holston III, is also resolutely 'for localism', and recognises that globalisation is 'not just about putting factories into countries, it's being part of that culture too'.

What is being acknowledged is that globalisation entails what is called 'insiderisation': a presence in, and understanding of, the 'local' arena as a fully-fledged insider. But the 'local' in this sense does not correspond to any specific territorial configuration. The global-local nexus is about the relation between globalising and particularising dynamics in the strategy of the global corporation, and the 'local' should be seen as a fluid and relational space, constituted only in and through its relation to the global. For the global corporation, the local might, in fact, correspond to a regional, national or even pan-regional sphere of activity.

This is to say that the 'local' should not be mistaken for the 'locality'. It is to emphasise that the global-local nexus does not create a privileged new role for the locality in the world economic arena. Of course local economies continue to matter. That is not the issue. We should, however, treat claims about new capacities for local autonomy and initiative with scepticism. If it is indeed the case that localities do now increasingly bypass the national state to deal directly with global corporations, world bodies or foreign governments, they do not do so on equal terms. Whether it is to attract a new car factory or the Olympic Games, they go as supplicants. And, even as supplicants, they go in competition with each other: cities and localities are now fiercely struggling against each other to attract footloose and predatory investors to their patch.

Of course, some localities are able to successfully 'switch' themselves in to the global networks, but others will remain 'unswitched' or even 'unplugged'. And, in a world characterised by the increasing mobility of capital and the rapid recycling of space, even those that manage to become connected in to the global system are always vulnerable to the abrupt withdrawal of investment and to disconnection from the global system.

The global-local nexus is also not straightforwardly about a renaissance of local cultures. There are those who argue that the old and rigid hegemony of national cultures is now being eroded from below by burgeoning local and regional cultures. Modern times are characterised, it is suggested, by a process of cultural decentralisation and by the sudden resurgence of place-bound traditions, languages and ways of life. It is important not to devalue the perceived and felt vitality of local cultures and identities. But again, their significance can only be understood in the context of a broader and encompassing process. In the cultural sphere, too, these are global times.

It may well be that in some cases the new global context is recreating the sense of place and sense of community in very positive ways, giving rise to an energetic cosmopolitanism in certain localities. In others, however, local fragmentation – remember the Saatchi point about the relationship between populations in midtown Manhattan and the Bronx – may inspire a nostalgic, introverted and parochial sense of local attachment and identity. If globalisation recontextualises and reinterprets cultural localism, it does so in ways that are equivocal and ambiguous.●

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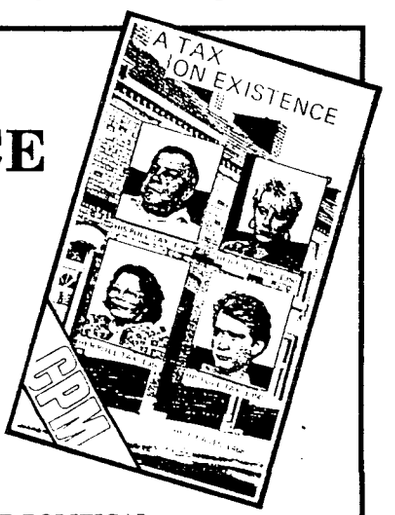

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Happy Doris Days

Sick of Christmas already? Try **Arthur Smith**'s aftershave instead

December, dominated as it is by Christmas, can be a depressing period for semi-professional comedians like myself. However much you try to avoid them, you always end up Doing Office Parties. The idea is sound in principle. Someone has seen you do a gig and thought: 'He's funny, he's just the thing we need to make this year's Christmas party a bit different. Everyone will like him, I'll get a lot of kudos and promotion in the new year.' You say, 'No,' they wave a wadge at you and off you go.

You get there to discover they didn't realise you'd need a stage. Or lights. Or a microphone. Even worse, you're due on after the in-house Christmas pantomime written by the personnel officer and starring Jessica-from-accounting as Cinderella. I know what this will be like: an appalling amateurish affair, full of esoteric sexist jokes about people in the office, a very bad song very badly performed, a woeful Cilla Black impression and the big finale – the marketing manager coming on as Kylie Minogue. This is screamingly funny. Nobody has ever seen anything funnier than fat Geoff in a skirt singing *I Should Be So Lucky*.

As they congratulate themselves and bring in more crates of sparkling white wine I shuffle on unannounced and unknown. The person who booked me (soon to be demoted) laughs too loudly and alone, as the rest of them get stuck into the wine, pair off and begin to cast interested glances at the photocopying room. Curiously, it doesn't seem to matter whether you're performing for some multinational company or a co-operative in Brixton, what they want is Not You.

But there's plenty of other work about at Christmas for people in my line: dorising around the stage as a pantomime dame, dorising around Debenham's as a Father Christmas and, here's a new one, dorising around the pages of *Marxism Today* ruminating about Christmas (NB 'to doris around' is 'to display frenetic activity to no great effect').

This latter task might seem simple; after all, everyone's interested in Christmas, even people who hate Christmas and aren't interested in it are interested in Christmas. It's impossible to avoid. You can go and camp in the Sahara throughout December, but even that's an implicit admission that you're interested in Christmas. This means that everyone in every paper, journal or magazine is feverishly writing articles about Christmas, the same ones every year:

'I've stuffed myself with turkey and now I feel guilty' *The Guardian*
'Christmas – the desperate shortage of nannies' *The Lady*
'Bonk your way through Boxing Day' *The Sun*
'Bonk your way through Boxing Day' *The Star*
'Bonk your way through Boxing Day' *The Times*
'Bonk your way through Boxing Day' *DIY Weekly*
'20 ways with mince pies' *Woman's Own*
'Why Robert Maxwell is great at Christmas' *Daily Mail*
'Revealed: Rudolf the red nosed reindeer is Elvis Presley' *Sunday Sport*
'How to get off with a man at the Christmas party' *New Woman*
'The hilarious antics of the royal family on Christmas Day' All publications except *The Independent* and *Marxism Today*
'Why Robert Maxwell will be even greater in the new year' *Daily Mirror*
'The truth about the pissed Father Christmases' All publications except *Debenham's Weekly*.

Christmas is analysed every year from every conceivable angle, so what am I supposed to write about? An article about Christmas in *Marxism Today*? It's already a ridiculous idea, like an article about reggae in *The Coppers' Gazette* or advice on coping with crack addiction in *The Church Times*. The man on the phone suggested I discourse on how long and boring it all is ('Life?' I asked. 'The Christmas period,' he replied. 'My article,' I reckoned). Very well, but since writing this, albeit in November, has already made me sick of the subject, henceforth I shall substitute the word 'Aftershave' for 'Christmas'.

Since they made January 1 a public holiday, many workforces have gone over to the full eight days off; eight days when nothing is open and nothing is happening. Nothing rules the day. The parks are full of people mooning around with desperate glints in their eyes. We've hit limbo. Either you're fed up with your relatives and loved ones, or you're fed up with not having any relatives or loved ones. You're fed up with being fed up or else you're fed up with not being fed up.

Underwriting all this is the end-of-the-year blues, and this year the end-of-the-decade blues. Another 10 years of not giving up smoking, of raping the planet, being horrible to the people you love, eating bacon sandwiches, not learning Italian, another decade where you didn't become immortal or save the planet from fascists, another decade with new diseases and disasters, another decade of Des O'Connor.

Another decade of Margaret Thatcher. Do you realise there are millions of people in this country who've only ever had an orgasm under the Tories? Is left-wing sex better than right-wing sex? These are the sort of futile thoughts that fill your brain in those dreaded eight days, anything rather than watch *The Great Escape* again.

I think even if everything was open and events were arranged it would still be a joyless week. Two years ago I did a gig at the Comedy Store on December 29. A more miserable, thin-blooded affair it would be hard to imagine. A man sat in the front row reading *The Sun*. In a frenzy of mock origami I tore it up; afterwards he came up to me and demanded 20p.

This was a man who'd clearly overdosed on Aftershave. It had been too much for him; all pretence of being a decent human being had withered away in the enforced bonhomie of it all. Because Aftershave is a time when you try to be nice to people. Goodwill to all men. And women. Being nice is an exhausting pastime and so inevitably culminates in your being horrible.

In conclusion, as one used to say in A-level English essays, Aftershave is crap and not worth talking about any more. I'm going to park my article with the man from *Marxism Today* and then go and listen to my bootleg tape of fat Geoff singing *Especially For You*. Happy Aftershave.●

Dear Editor,
Here is my article, which is somewhat short of 1,500 words, but, be fair, you're not paying me, and is anyone interested anyway? I hope you precipitate the downfall of capitalism in the new year.
Yours,
Arthur.

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Jane Smith

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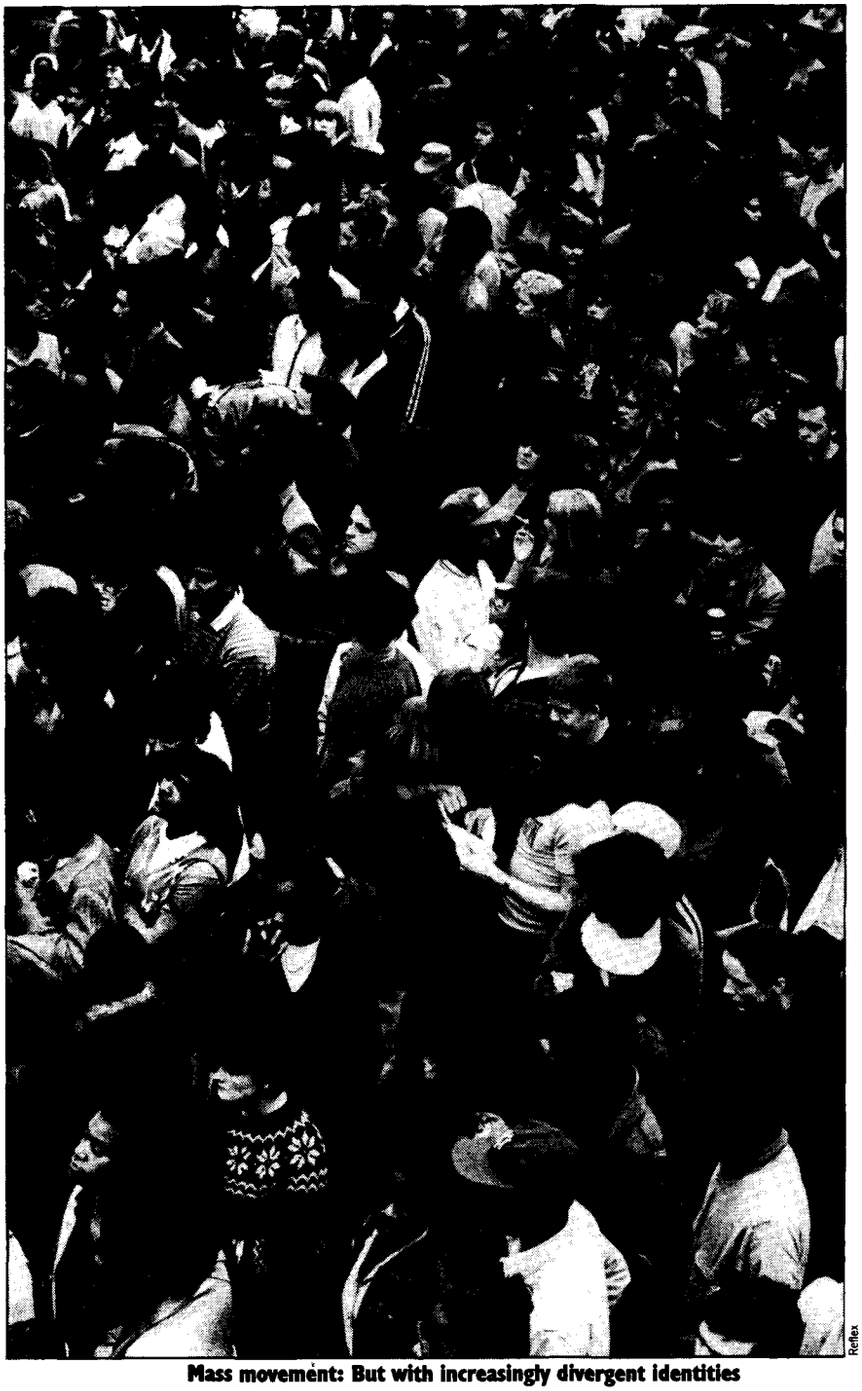
Value For Many

The turbulent state of politics has prompted a questioning of those root values which sustain political beliefs. **Jeffrey Weeks** explores the prospects for a renewal of socialist values



Reflex

Mass movement: But with increasingly divergent identities

Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others. At its most basic it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality. But it is also about your social relationships, your complex involvement with others; and in the modern world these have become ever more complex and confusing. Each of us lives with a variety of potentially-contradictory identities, which battle within us for allegiance: as men or women, black or white, straight or gay, able-bodied or disabled, 'British' or 'European'...The list is potentially infinite, and so, therefore, are our possible belongings. Which of them we focus on, bring to the fore, depends on a host of factors. At the centre, however, are the values we share or wish to share with others.

'Identity-politics' were initially defined by and for the new social movements that came to public consciousness from the late 1960s: the black movement, feminism, lesbian and gay liberation and so on. The question of integrating these creative but diffuse and potentially divisive forces into the political mainstream has been part of the agony of the Left during the last decade. Issues of identity are now, however, at the centre of modern politics. When Mrs Thatcher utters anathemas against Brussels and all its works, or interferes in the details of the history curriculum, she is engaged in an exercise in delineating a cultural and political identity – in this case of 'Britishness' – which she wants us to share. When President Gorbachev discourses on 'our common European home', he is striving to re-form our perception of the Soviet identity, and to re-fashion our idea of Europe. When the Bradford mullahs or-

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ganise against *The Satanic Verses* and follow the Ayatollah's *fatwa* they are simultaneously affirming and fashioning an identity: as muslims, but also as black British entitled to the protection of the blasphemy laws like Anglicans and Catholics and evangelicals. When we mourn with students in Beijing, or express solidarity with black South Africans, or run (or sing, or joke) 'for the world', we are striving to realise our identities as members of the global village, as citizens of the world.

Identities are not neutral. Behind the quest for identity are different, and often conflicting, values. By saying who we are, we are also striving to express what we are, what we believe and what we desire. The problem is that these beliefs, needs and desires are often patently in conflict, not only between different communities but within individuals themselves.

All this makes value debates particularly fraught and delicate. They are not simply speculations about the world and our place in it. They touch on fundamental, and deeply-felt, issues about who we are and what we want to become. They also pose major political questions: how to achieve a reconciliation between our collective needs as human beings and our specific needs as individuals and members of diverse communities, how to balance the universal and the particular. These are not new questions. They are likely, nevertheless, to loom ever-larger as we engage with the certainty of uncertainty that characterises 'new times'.

'President Gorbachev and green politics have made an impact because of their expression of a human solidarity underlying the divisions of the world'

This is the background to a new concern with values in mainstream politics. Most notoriously, Mrs Thatcher has invoked 'Victorian values' and has discoursed about everything from soccer hooliganism to religion to litter. But even the Labour Party, in an uncharacteristic burst of philosophising, has produced a statement on *Democratic Socialist Aims And Values*. And these are but the tips of an iceberg.

Such flurries have not been entirely absent in the past from British political and cultural history. But on the whole, from the second world war until recently, the political class eschewed too searching a discussion of values, preferring, in Harold Macmillan's world-weary remark, to leave that to the bishops. During the years of the social-democratic consensus, welfarism, with its commitment to altruism and caring, provided a framework for social policy, but offered little guidance on the purposes of the good society.

Similarly, in the sphere of private life, the most coherent framework of moral regulation – that enshrined in the 'permissive reforms' of the 1960s of the laws relating to homosexuality, abortion, censorship etc, – is based on a deliberate suspension of any querying of what is 'right' or 'wrong'. It relies instead on subtle distinctions between what the law may accept for upholding 'public decency', and what can be tolerated in private when the curtains are closed. Most of us are probably quietly grateful for such small mercies.

As the postwar consensus has crumbled, however, the search for more-or-less coherent value systems has become rather more fevered. On a personal level some people have moved promiscuously through drugs and alternative lifestyles to health fads and religion. A number seek to be 'born again'. Perhaps most of us just share a vague feeling that things are not quite right. On the level of politics, various fundamentalisms, on left and right, have burst forth; each articulating their own truth, whether it be about the perils of pornography, the wrongs done to animals, the rights and wrongs of this or that religion or the marvels of the market economy. There is a new climate where values matter, and politicians, willy-nilly, are being drawn into the debate.

'Speaking of values,' the philosopher Paul Feyerabend has said, 'is a roundabout way of describing the kind of life one wants to lead or thinks one wants to lead.'[1] Mrs Thatcher has been clearer about the sort of life she wants us to lead than any other recent political leader. She does not trust her bishops. So the values of the corner-shop and the cautious housewife have expanded inexorably into the culture of enterprise and the spiritual significance of capitalism. From her paean to 'Victorian values' in the run-up to the 1983 general election, to her address to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 1988, Mrs Thatcher's moral outlook has had, in Jonathan Raban's phrase, a peculiar 'integrity'[2].

Questions of value have traditionally been more central to socialist debates than to conservatism, but during the 1970s and early 1980s the nervous collapse of the Left allowed little room for such niceties. Recently, there have been welcome signs of a revival of concern with basic values. The Labour Party's 1988 statement, *Democratic Socialist Aims And Values*, intended to frame the party's policy review, may have been too bland for many people's taste ('The true purpose of democratic socialism...is the creation of a genuinely free society.') but it was the first time since 1917 that the party had attempted to define its purposes, and in a recognisable philosophical tradition (essentially the rights-based liberalism of the American philosopher John Rawls).

At the same time the party seems to be attempting to resurrect the half-buried collectivist traditions of the British population. The lyrical Kinnock election broadcast in 1987 subliminally told us of the importance of rootedness and belonging as the basis for political advance. The Labour Party's poster campaign early in 1989 – 'The Labour Party. *Our* party' – similarly articulated a sense of shared values, of communal spirit, lying latent in the collective unconscious.

In part, of course, these Labour Party innovations illustrate the wizardry of ad-men skills. But it is not too fanciful to see them as a reflection of broader tendencies towards re-asserting universal humanistic values, which transcend conventional political divisions. In their different ways, President Gorbachev and green politics have made an impact because of their expression of a human solidarity underlying the divisions of the world. Gorbachev's address to the United Nations in 1988 turned on a call to respect 'universal human values', and looked forward to an ending of the arbitary divisions between peoples. Green philosophy calls on the same sense of our common destiny and interdependence, as human beings, and as fellow inhabitants of spaceship earth, and in doing so claims to displace traditional divisions between left and right.

We cannot overestimate the power of these various (and perhaps sometimes contradictory) appeals to human solidarity after a decade dominated by an ethic of human selfishness. We are reminded that what we have in common as human beings is more important than what divides us as individuals or members of other collectivities.

Nevertheless there are difficulties for the Left in an all-embracing humanism. As a philosophical position it may be a good starting point. It does not, however, readily tell us how to deal with difference. As President Gorbachev could bitterly affirm, it is difference – economic, national, linguistic, ethnic, religious – and the conflicting identities and demands that diversity gives rise to, that poses a major threat to perestroika and to human solidarity. If ever-growing social complexity, cultural diversity and a proliferation of identities is indeed a mark of the post-modern world, then all the appeals to our common interest as humans will be as naught unless we can at the same time learn to live with difference. This should be the crux of modern debates over values.

In confronting the challenge of social and moral diversity, the responses of left and right are significantly different. The Right has a coherent, if in the long run untenable, view of the moral economy. At its most extreme, expressed in Mrs Thatcher's dictum that there is no such thing as society, only individuals and their families; difference becomes merely a matter of individual quirks or pathologies. Social goods are products of individual wills or desires, mediated by family responsibilities. In the economic sphere, this leads to a privileging of individual choice, 'the essence', as Mrs Thatcher put it during the 1987 election campaign, of morality. But moral choice in turn, particularly with regard to issues such as sexuality, is limited by the commitment to a traditional concept of domestic obligation, in and through the family.

The Left, on the other hand, is heir to a strong sense of collective identities, of

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Lambeth Environmental Film Festival

SUNDAY 3rd DECEMBER

2pm SCREEN 1

PROFITS FROM POISON
Television Trust for the Environment

HELL TO PAY
Circle Womens' Film and Video

THE PRIOR NATION
Television Trust for the Environment

DISCUSSION

5pm SCREEN 2

CUBATAO – Valley of Death
Television Trust for the Environment

CHICO – I WANT TO LIVE
Central TV

BAKA – GROWING UP
Channel 4 TV

DISCUSSION

8pm SCREEN 3

POWAQQATSI
Cannon

WITH THESE HANDS
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DISCUSSION

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'We need a language of politics that is able to speak to difference and uncertainty within a framework of common principles'

powerful inherited solidarities derived from class and work communities, and of different social constituencies, however inadequately in the past it has been able to deal with them. Multiculturalism, as it was articulated from the 1960s in the legislation on racial equality, embodied a notion of different communities evolving gradually into a harmonious society where difference was both acknowledged and irrelevant. In rather less hopeful times, the commitment to the co-existence of different value systems is implied in Labour's *Aims And Values* statement: 'Socialists rejoice in human diversity.' But the Left has been less confident and sure-footed when faced with the reality of difference.

When the Livingstone-led Greater London Council attempted to let a hundred flowers bloom at County Hall in pursuit of a new majority of minorities, the response of the Labour Party establishment varied from the sceptical to the horrified. Nor should we be entirely surprised at that. Despite its political daring, and commendable commitment to those hitherto excluded from the political mainstream, it was difficult to detect behind the GLC policy anything more coherent than the belief that grass-roots activity and difference were themselves prime goods. Empowerment, yes; but who should the Left empower?

It is the Salman Rushdie crisis that has dramatised the absence of any clear-cut philosophy on the Left. The Rushdie affair is important for socialists not simply because it concerns the fate of an individual (and an individual of the Left at that) but because it underscores in the most painful way the dilemmas of diversity. At its simplest we have an apparent conflict of absolutes: the right of an author to freedom of speech, to challenge whomsoever he wishes in a democratic society, set against the claims of a distinctive moral community not to have its fundamental religious beliefs attacked and undermined. But of course the real divisions are more complex and profound.

The Left has not on the whole been willing to endorse an absolute right of free speech. On the contrary it has supported campaigns against racist and sexist literature, while a strong minority has supported the banning of pornography. And on the other side, the muslim communities at the centre of the crisis are themselves not monolithic: bisected as they inevitably are by class, gender and political conflicts. At the same time the issues raised do not exist only in a meta-realm of principle: they work their way through the murky world of politics, in this case the complexities of international politics as well as the ward-by-ward problems of Labour politicians.

Nevertheless, there is a central question at the heart of the Rushdie affair, and it concerns the possibilities and limits of pluralism in a complex society. Let's take as an example the question of religious education in schools. The government, by insisting under the 1988 Education Reform Act that there should be a daily act of Christian worship in maintained schools, is in effect asserting the centrality of the Christian tradition to 'our national heritage'. In Mrs Thatcher's words: 'For centuries it has been our very life-blood.' People with other faiths and culture are always, of course, welcome in 'our land'. But by implication, their beliefs can only ever hope to have a secondary position in relation to 'ours'[3].

Labour accepts a less monolithic view of our religious past and present. As a result it seems prepared to support state funding of separate fundamentalist muslim schools. There is a certain multicultural rationale in this. If Anglican, Jewish and Roman Catholic schools are state-supported there seems no logic in not supporting schools of other faiths. But schools transmit cultural values, some of which, in the case of fundamentalists, run counter to oft-declared values of the Left. In the muslim case, the schools will be based on a principle of sex-segregation which elsewhere Labour opposes. As a letter to *The Guardian* from Southall Black Sisters put it: 'The Labour Party is prepared to abandon the principle of equality where black women are concerned. Instead, they deliver us into the hands of male, conservative and religious forces within our communities, who deny us our right to live as we please.'[4] This underlines the danger of seeing communities as unified wholes, rather than as the locus of debate and divisions. Not surprisingly, the 'multiculturalist' values of the Labour Party seem as likely to cause confusion, conflict and distrust as the explicitly uniculturalist views of the Right.

It is perhaps appropriate that these dilemmas should have been brought to the surface by the publication of, and reaction to, Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. Not only was the book written by an 'immigrant' and about 'immigrants'. The book itself is about 'changing identities', about the transformations of identities that affect the migrant who leaves the familiar reference points of his homeland and finds himself in a place where the rules are different and all the markers have been changed. But this is not simply the experience of the migrant. The sense of dislocation and disorientation, of the rules of the game subtly changing, of the co-existence within us of conflicting needs, desires and identities, is becoming a major cultural experience for us all.

The basic issue can be stated quite simply: by what criteria can we choose between the conflicting claims of different loyalties? To ask the question immediately underlines the poverty of our thinking about this. Can the 'rights' of a group obliterate the 'rights' of an individual? Should the morality of one sector of the population be allowed to limit the freedom of other citizens? To what extent should one particular definition of the good and justice prevail over others? These are ancient questions, but the alarming fact is that the Left lacks a common language for addressing them, let alone resolving them.

There have been two characteristic approaches on the Left in confronting these dilemmas. Firstly, there is the 'discourse of rights', probably still the most potent mobilising force in the worlds of politics and morality. In the United States the protection of individual rights is enshrined in the constitution, and the claim to group rights has become the basis of many of the transforming currents of recent American politics, from the civil-rights and black-power movements to the women's movement and lesbian and gay liberation. Elsewhere in the West, a rights-based politics is similarly enshrined in written constitutions, bills of rights, constitutional courts and so on.

In Britain, the tradition is enfeebled. Individual rights, though much bandied-around in the political rough and tumble, are not entrenched in a constitutional settlement, and the concept of group rights barely exists. Rights are, however, clearly back on the agenda of the Left. The response to Charter 88, with its appeal for a new constitutional settlement, with government subordinate to the law and basic rights entrenched, suggests a strongly-felt need for a codification and protection of fundamental rights.

Unfortunately, the claim to right, however well established at a constitutional level, does not help when rights are seen to be in conflict. Take the issue of abortion, yet again the focus of moral debate in America and Britain. Here the conflict is between two violently-conflicting claims: the right of the 'unborn child' against the right of a woman to control her own body. In these stark terms the conflict is irresolvable, because two value systems tug in quite different directions. The problem is that rights do not spring fully armed from nature. They cannot find a justification simply because they are claimed. Rights are products of human association, social organisation, traditions of struggle, and historical definitions of needs and obligations: whatever their claims to universality, they are limited by the philosophical system to which they belong, and the social and political context in which they are asserted.

This is not to deny the importance of rights-based arguments. But if we are to take rights seriously we must begin to articulate the sort of rights and the type of political culture we want.

This is the starting point for the Left's second major approach to the dilemma of choice: the politics of emancipation. In his 1840s' essay *On The Jewish Question* Marx counterposed to the 'morality of rights' a 'morality of emancipation', and even more powerfully than the claim to rights this has proved a potent

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'The Rushdie affair is important for socialists because it underscores in the most painful way the dilemmas of diversity'

mobilising force. It offers a vision of a totally free society, where everyone's potentiality is fully realised; and a powerful analysis of the constraints on the realisation of human emancipation. At its heart is a denial that want, division, selfishness and conflict are essential parts of human nature. True human nature, it claims, can flourish in a truly-emancipated society.

Most of us who are socialist must have been inspired by this vision. As a politics of liberation it shaped the rhetoric of the social movements that emerged in the 1960s. It is still latent in the hunger for utopia and for the transcendence of difference that shades our politics. The difficulty is that the practice has rarely kept up with the vision, particularly in the history of marxism. The marxist tradition has been reluctant to define the nature of the emancipated society, and has been noticeably blind to questions of nationalism, ethnicity, gender and sexuality. Nor do the experiences of the socialist countries offer much confidence in the attainability of emancipation in the terms offered by the tradition so far.

We must not confuse a noble goal with the sordid practices of particular regimes. But we need to ponder whether the very project of human emancipation as conventionally set forth is not itself the fundamental problem. The glorious goal has all too often justified dubious means, while the absence of any detailed exposition of the meaning of emancipation has left us floundering when faced by the reality of conflicting claims to right and justice.

The Rushdie affair has underlined the inadequacy of the existing languages of rights and emancipation for dealing with real conflicts. Rights-based arguments leave us staring blankly at conflicting claims, while an emancipatory rhetoric leaves Rushdie trapped in his safe-house. In practice, in the absence of anything better we seem to be faced by two stark alternatives. On the one hand we have a call to respect absolutely the rights of a specific community to organise its own way of life, regardless of the traditions of the wider community as a whole. This has been put most clearly by Keith Vaz MP: 'To goad and mock the new religions is to rob them of their roots and sensitivities. They must be left to develop in their own way.'[5] This in effect is an appeal to give full play to cultural difference, whatever the implications, simply because enough people are willing and able to affirm the importance of what is different.

On the other hand, there is a sort of despair of the challenge of diversity. The novelist Fay Weldon has put it sharply: 'Our attempt at multiculturalism has failed... The uni-culturalist policy of the United States *worked*, welding its new peoples, from every race, every belief, into a whole.'[6] Pluralism is in fact institutionalised rather than obliterated in the US, and inter-communal strife is not exactly unknown. But the philosophy of assimilation, where differences dissolve in the great 'melting pot' of America, obviously still has a powerful appeal.

These opposed positions are effectively mirror-images of each other, both assuming that differences must be absolute. The reality is much more contradictory.

Different identities, and the social solidarities that sustain them, reflect the variety of individual and social needs in the modern world. Such needs are in constant flux. They cannot be frozen by any moral system; indeed, the fervour and anger of fundamentalism can be seen as a reflex against the rapidity of change, where everything that was fixed begins to seem radically uncertain. To be able to deal with the world as it is, and to change it, we need a language of politics that is able to speak to difference and uncertainty within a framework of common principles.

There is no ready-made blueprint for this. But as a first step we could usefully learn the value of what Feyerabend calls a 'democratic relativism'[7], which recognises that there are many truths and many different ways of being in the world; people should have a right to live in the ways that satisfy their needs.

In the Rushdie case, this implies respect for the traditions and aspirations of the muslim community, and the creation of protected spaces where their voices may be heard. But radical relativism can only work if arguments over needs can be conducted freely and democratically in each community, and between different communities. Communities of identity are never monolithic; they embody traditions of arguments and debate, as the feminist interventions within the muslim community illustrate. We need a democratic framework which allows debate to flourish.

So the recognition of a plurality of truths is a starting point only. It in turn must be governed by what David Held has called the principle of 'democratic autonomy'[8]. This argues that citizens should be free and equal in the determination of the conditions of their own lives, sharing equal rights and obligations, so long as they do not use their freedoms to negate the rights and claims of others. Democratic autonomy implies a respect and tolerance for other people's needs as the guarantee of your own freedom to choose. Groups and communities become potentially undemocratic, as fundamentalists of whatever flavour do, when they begin to proclaim the universal truth of their particular experiences. The freedom to live your own life in the way you choose must imply an acceptance of other ways of life. Rushdie has found to his cost that this principle as yet has very little leverage in the fundamentalist community he was addressing.

Such principles, simple to write, painful to live, imply the existence of a wider political community based on acceptance of diversity and democracy. We may not be able to find, indeed we should not seek, a single way of life that would satisfy us all. That does not mean we cannot agree on common political ends: the construction of what can best be described as 'a community of communities', to achieve a maximum political unity without denying difference.

Such a political community will necessarily embody a notion of the common good and of justice, in order to regulate the variety of rights and demands. We can list, as socialists have always done, the goals of a just society: the ending of economic exploitation, social inequality, racism, gender and sexual oppression and all the other relations of domination and subordination that inhibit human potential. But if the desirable ends are not to be undermined, we must pay more attention than in the past to the means: the development of a polity where differences can be aired and negotiated, and unavoidable conflicts mediated, in a democratic fashion.

These principles are not new. In essence they can be traced back to the earliest discussions of democracy in ancient Greece, and to the ideals of localised democracies of the early American republic. They represent a revitalisation of the communitarian tradition of politics. At the same time they build on those elements of the British socialist tradition which have always stressed the importance of grass-roots activity and democratic control of social and economic life, supported feminist struggles and advocated sexual freedom. 'Radical pluralism' as outlined here is congruent with the best in the democratic and socialist traditions.

This approach to socialist values is at most a framework within which we can begin to rethink the question of difference at both the individual and collective level. Rather more effectively than a simple claim to right, such a position offers a set of criteria for assessing conflicting claims. More modestly than a morality of emancipation it avoids declarations about a final resolution of all conflict in a magical escape from oppression and exploitation. The aim instead is to offer a concept of politics as a process of continuous debate and mutual education, and to broaden the democratic imagination through the acceptance of human variety and difference.●

This essay is being published in *Changing Politics, Changing Identities*, Jonathan Rutherford (ed) Lawrence and Wishart, forthcoming 1990.

1. *Farewell To Reason*, Paul Feyerabend (Verso 1987, p54).
2. *God, Man And Mrs Thatcher*, Jonathan Raban (Chatto 1989).
3. The quotations are from Mrs Thatcher's speech to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, quoted in Raban, *God, Man And Mrs Thatcher*.
4. *The Guardian*, July 22, 1989.
5. *The Independent*, July 29, 1989.
6. *Sacred Cows*, Fay Weldon (Chatto 1989, pp31-32).
7. Feyerabend, p54.
8. *Models Of Democracy*, David Held (Polity Press 1987).

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Days Of Reckoning

A Roundtable Discussion

The bubble has burst. From an economic miracle, we are back in the old mess. Except much worse.

The participants in the discussion are Wynne Godley, professor of applied economics at Cambridge University, who was head of the Cambridge Economic Policy Group, 1970-1982. Bob Rowthorn, reader in economics at Cambridge University and co-author of *Deindustrialisation And Foreign Trade* and William Keegan, who chaired the discussion, and is economic and associate editor of *The Observer* and author of *Mr Lawson's Gamble*.

In the mid-80s, Britain lived in a fantasy world of economic triumphalism. Many believed that Thatcherism had waved a magic wand and produced an economic miracle. Those who had for long taken a gloomy view of the long-term prospects of the British economy, and were critics of the Thatcher-Lawson strategy, became deeply unfashionable.

Now the chickens have come home to roost. The British economy is palpably back in crisis. That crisis is far worse than is generally perceived. We asked three key figures from the 'gloomy school', Wynne Godley, William Keegan and Bob Rowthorn, to discuss how bad things really are and what problems might face a Labour government.●

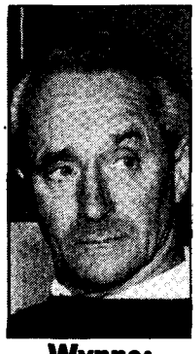
How do you see the present economic situation?

Wynne There's a strategic problem of enormous magnitude which is not properly perceived by the public and hasn't properly entered the public discussion. And the nature of that can be simply characterised. We have a huge balance of payments deficit which is the result of a longstanding and deeply-entrenched failure of manufacturing industry to compete. The deficit is not just a temporary blip due to mistaken policies over the last year or two.

Some people say the deficit doesn't matter.

Wynne I think they're all totally mistaken. In particular I don't agree with the Nigel Lawson argument that there's no problem because the government accounts, by his own very dubious reckoning, are in surplus, so it's just a matter for the private sector and it can finance the deficit.

Bob It's a bit like saying that an ordinary person who is spending more than their income will never have any problems as long as other people are willing to lend to them. This is perfectly true, but we all know that other people will not be willing to lend to them indefinitely. And the question therefore is not whether the private sector institutions are financing the country's balance of payments deficit by borrowing abroad, but for how much longer can they do so, and what are the consequences for the country when it becomes difficult for them to carry on financing this deficit. The basic lesson which we see time and again all over the world is that when it becomes difficult for anyone, the private sector or the government, to finance the balance of payments deficit, what you get is a collapse of confidence in the currency, foreigners saying they are not going to lend, a spontaneous devaluation, as foreigners refuse to buy the national currency. Or, alternatively, the government is forced to raise interest rates higher and higher. Or a combination of the two.



Wynne: 'The underlying structural problem has become so large that I'm worried there now isn't a solution to it'

Wynne If it is agreed that the deficit matters, that leads straight into the next question. The increase in the deficit has been accompanied by such a large increase in domestic demand that our capacity to produce is overstretched. Therefore it's a necessary condition for improving the balance of payments that domestic demand is reduced by a very large amount. However, if all you do is reduce domestic demand there will be a full-blown recession, unless export demand rises, or the demand for imports falls, on a scale large enough to fill the gap. But the possibility of that happening runs slap contrary to the entire history of the postwar period.

What's your view of interest rates being used as the key policy measure to reduce domestic demand?

Wynne The exclusive reliance on interest rates is exactly the wrong instrument. Because it's uncertain in its magnitude, uncertain in its timing, its incidence is inequitable, and in terms of the structural impact on demand, it is incorrect, because it's going to hit investment and exports as much as anything else. It's giving, in a vague and chaotic way, the wrong signals, as it has application to the wrong components of demand. The cut in domestic demand should be confined as nearly as possible to consumption, so that investment and net exports can potentially lead us out of any recession and generate sustained growth in the long term.

And that involves a change of policy?

Wynne Yes. And there are two important ways in which it could change for the better so that consumption is reduced without reliance on high interest rates. One is that direct controls over household credit are introduced, the other is that direct taxes are raised. Nigel Lawson has been saying that most household debt takes the form of mortgages, with the nuance that since you can't touch mortgages you can't do anything at all. Well, even if you accept that you can't do anything about mortgages, the statement about the structure of the debt is inappropriate, because non-mortgage debt actually rose in 1988 by £6.5 billion. You don't need to affect existing borrowers at all. All you need to do is cut new borrowing. The turnaround in net borrowing would cause a large reduction in consumption. And it would take place immediately.

The other point that Lawson makes about credit controls is that they are unfair because clever people can use the Eurodollar market to borrow. But this argument is on a par with saying

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that because some people can evade income tax, it should be abolished. The point is not whether people can evade it, but whether evasion is sufficiently wide to make the operation ineffective.

Given the need to reduce consumption, the need to do something about the balance of payments, because we're faced with the financing problem, the worry about interest rates being so high and about raising them further, what in an ideal world would you be recommending? A budget in the spring which raised taxes?

Wynne I'd have a budget right now. I'd bring in direct control of credit immediately, and probably have some kind of interim tax increase, which could take the form of removing the ceiling on national insurance contributions. In addition, you could announce a generalised increase in income tax to take place in the spring budget, but save time by announcing it now.

Bob The measures we're talking about inevitably involve a reduction in domestic demand and consumption. I think that means they must be accompanied by measures which encourage investment. One way of encouraging investment is to devalue the pound so our exports become more competitive and firms want to invest to produce exports for the foreign market. Another way is to encourage capacity creation by making it attractive to invest profits instead of handing them out as dividends or accumulating financial assets.

There's a lot to be said for the government saying: 'There are a number of sectors that are important to us, namely manufacturing, together with the associated infrastructure and productive services,' and actually come to special arrangements to encourage them. If you look at the last 10 years you see that investment in manufacturing has been extremely low over that period taken as a whole, whereas sectors like finance and retail distribution have mushroomed. This is probably the most fundamental imbalance. Priority has to be given to manufacturing, above all other sectors, which means it has to have priority of financing, it has to receive a lot of encouragement, if necessary by squeezing many other sectors. A further expansion in the retail sector or in the City of London is of no benefit whatsoever in the medium term for the economy.

Wynne, you still look troubled.

Wynne I feel we have not yet conveyed the magnitude of the strategic problem.

Bob Can I give a figure which I think puts it in perspective. If you look at the balance of payments deficit, people say that it's 4-5% of GDP, which means that we have to produce 4-5% more, which must go entirely to exports, 4-5% more without consuming. That's extremely misleading, we can't export health services, we can't export shops and so on. What we have to look at is the balance of payments deficit in comparison with our production of the kind of things we would need to export to close that gap. The prospects for a major improvement in services are not very good. This gap can only be closed by exporting more manufactured goods. The present balance of payments deficit is equal to between 20 and 25% of our domestic production of manufactured goods.

It's a staggering figure, which I think very few people are aware of.

Bob If we were to close the gap now we would have to produce another 20-25% more manufactured goods than we do now, without consuming any more at home. That's a staggering figure because it is equivalent to something like four years' growth of manufacturing production at 5% a year. To eradicate the balance of payments deficit in four years without a recession would mean our manufacturing industry growing at 5% each year although capacity is already overstretched, and our own consumption of manufactures not growing at all. That would be an extraordinary achievement.

Wynne Particularly as it runs completely counter to history.

Turning now to the politics of it all, we have to distinguish between what might be recommended after the next election – in 1991 or 1992 – and what is likely to happen before then. Far from acknowledging that there is a problem remotely resembling this magnitude, the present government has a vested interest in arguing that all we have are the problems of success, that everything's wonderful. I myself don't think that they are likely to do any more than the minimum. Would you agree with that, or do you think the situation is so serious that politically even this government might attempt to address it?

Bob I think they might face a severe problem with financing the balance of payments deficit, in which case they might find that the pound starts to collapse. And to stop this happening, they would raise interest rates. Then what you would get is a recession at home. A severe recession would improve the balance of payments in the short term, because people would spend less on imported manufactures. On the other hand, it contributes to the longer term problems because we don't install new capacity. So in two or three years' time, we might find another half million unemployed, who knows how many more it could be. It's unlikely to be a repeat of 1979-81, but I could be wrong.

Wynne But it could happen if there is a large drop in household borrowing. Nobody knows what the response of households to high interest rates will be in terms of their savings. In 1988 net household borrowing was £54 billion, an astounding figure, far greater than it was, for instance, in 1987 or any previous year. If that now went to zero, which it might, you could have a drop in consumption of 8-10%. The balance of payments would get better at the cost of a hair-raising recession. On the other hand, if there is no improvement in the performance of manufacturing industry, I think it is unlikely that any growth rate in excess of about 1% will see any improvement in the balance of payments at all. So we have, therefore, a spectrum of chaotic and unpleasant possibilities in the short term.

Bob: 'The most important thing a Labour government should do is to say how serious the situation is'

It all looks so gloomy that perhaps one should ask whether the present government can possibly achieve a position, which most people assume it will, of having a give-away budget before the election which eases the pressure and lowers taxes and buys votes in the usual way?

Wynne The only way I can see that happening is if the recession came early enough, and on a very large scale, which it might do. You might then see a sufficient recovery of the balance of payments to allow a last-minute reflation, even though the structural problems had not been addressed. That's a very ugly story but rather unlikely.

Bob If the underlying problems have not been resolved, then a give-away budget might then cause such a loss of confidence in sterling that it could then lead to a run on the pound. It might not therefore be feasible.

Let's imagine it's 1992, a Labour government has just been elected. What do you recommend? What kind of policies would have to be introduced?

Bob The most important thing a Labour goverment should do, and what the Labour Party should do in opposition, is to say how serious the situation is, say that there is no magic wand.

Wynne Certainly the EMS is not a magic wand.

Bob What Labour can offer is not a solution that's painless, but one that involves the burdens being more equitably shared, and the problem more effectively dealt with. Labour must take a long-term view. The most important thing is that manufacturing industry has to have priority above virtually anything else, that expansion of capacity and improving the competitiveness of manufacturing are the most important aspects of policy.

The second thing is that Britain will only get investment in manufacturing industry on a very large scale if it's profitable. Investment can be made profitable partly through subsidising it by means of low interest rates, tax breaks, and such like, and partly if there is a realistic exchange rate. The only way to produce a realistic exchange rate in a situation of near-full capacity utilisation, which is the most likely situation facing Labour, is to have an incomes policy. Without an incomes policy, if there is a free-for-all in wages, there will simply be inflation and a collapse of confidence in the pound. My feeling is that a Labour government faced with wage inflation at home would have less credibility abroad than a Conservative one.

Wynne But at least a Labour government would be in the unusual position of

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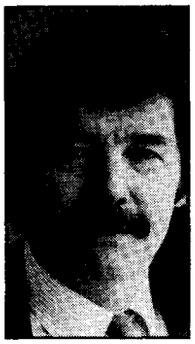
having something palpable and important to offer. If a Labour government were to reinstate a commitment to full employment, to regional policy and to decent public services, then these would be important new elements of a political bargain. With previous incomes policies, governments have never really had anything to offer, they've just said, 'please be good'.



Bill: 'The present government has a vested interest in arguing that all we have are the problems of success'

Bob The magnitude of the problem makes it a bit like a wartime situation or postwar reconstruction. It's only feasible on the basis of some kind of equity. In other words, we not only have to make choices as to who's going to make most of the sacrifices, but these decisions must rest on a broad measure of agreement in society, including those most affected. The same issues are now arising on the ecological front. Everyone recognises that problems like global warming and the ozone layer can only be solved on the basis of some notion of equity, so that those best able to make sacrifices do so. The same thing applies with incomes policy. It's only if you have some notion of justice underlying it that it becomes feasible. And you can only get that if you start talking about it well in advance, which means now.

Public spending's been squeezed in recent years. A lot of people worry about the disarray they see around them, the infrastructure, the social services, the public services. There are a lot of expectations being built up about what would happen if a Labour government with different priorities came in. Given the enormous strategic nature of the problem we've been discussing so far, how do you think those expectations will be met?

Bob Only with great difficulty.

Wynne They can be met up to a degree.

Bob The problem is that under the Thatcher government a substantial section of the population, including many people who may vote Labour, have done very well as far as their personal, private income is concerned. They have also seen the public services degenerate around them, and they want better public services.

But the political question is whether or not they are willing to give back part of the financial gains they've made under Thatcher, which were paid for by making the public services deteriorate. What essentially Thatcher's done is put money in the pockets of people who've kept their jobs, by running down the public services. Now you can't reverse that process overnight. It's not realistic to expect the average person in employment to take a substantial cut in their post-tax pay to support a Labour government. What you can expect is for them not to have a significant rise in post-tax pay over three or four years, which would give Labour quite a lot of resources to play around with.

After all, after 1945 a Labour government improved the public services quite considerably, in a situation of great stringency. What you have to argue is that the price of an improved public sector is restraint upon the incomes of the average person. But it would be quite wrong to argue that public service improvement should take precedence over productive investment, because that's really a very short- sighted policy. You have to argue that it has to take precedence over personal consumption.

How can the European Community alleviate the British economy's perilous state?

Wynne There are many people who seem to think that a closer union with Europe, either through membership of the EMS, or later on by closer economic and monetary union, will automatically solve these problems. I think that is absolutely wrong. The country will always be impoverished if it buys imports without being able to sell its goods abroad. As the Delors report itself correctly points out, a balance of payments problem becomes a regional problem, if there is a monetary union. But it's a regional problem writ large.

Bob If you look at the experience of regions within, say, the United Kingdom, the fact is that the depressed regions can stay depressed for extraordinarily long periods of time, almost indefinitely, with subsidies from the centre which are very, very big, much bigger than the ones being proposed by Delors.

Now the question is how does a region resolve its balance of payments problem? And the argument that a region doesn't have a balance of payments problem is idiotic, because the way it resolves it is by people becoming unemployed and eventually leaving. One can imagine, without a very strong European regional policy, Britain becoming the Northern Ireland of Europe, in which you appear to establish some equilibrium but it's because people are leaving all the time. And that is the current prospect we face unless we actually have a programme for positive development of domestic industry.

At a time when some people see some kind of salvation in Europe, you are saying that this doesn't get away from the need for a domestically generated industrial policy?

Wynne Part of it could be generated in Europe – by a comprehensive strategy for the development of industry throughout the whole of the European Community, including a location-of-industry policy. But we won't get anything at all if we don't join in the discussion.

Bob I am very much in favour of a more and more integrated united states of Europe. That is the way ahead. But I don't think that you can expect the centre in an institution like that to be able to dictate what happens in every region. You also need effective regional governments. In our case this would be a British or even an English government. It is worthwhile saying that a really close integration in Europe might see the break-up of the United Kingdom, and we might be sitting around in 10 years' time talking about what England should be doing. Whatever it is, the notion that a comprehensive European political entity is going to replace the need for local initiative is wrong.

Wynne It's very important, if we're going to support the idea of increased integration with Europe, that we mustn't lose the point that the European budget itself has got to be enlarged.

Bob About 10 times.

Wynne Yes, that's right, exactly. It can't just be this slightly nebulous concept of positive planning, positive integration and regional policy. There has also got to be a much larger Community budget. It needs to be at least 7% of community GDP, as the MacDougall report suggests.

Bob Our discussion has been mainly couched as if the United Kingdom was a separate country that happens to be vaguely connected to Europe. But if we are thinking of 10 years from 1992, by that stage we may well have seen a lot of the links binding the United Kingdom together undermined to a considerable degree and, more to the point, we may well be sufficiently integrated into Western Europe that we have to think in quite different terms. The European dimension might become increasingly the starting point of the way we think of the problem. Which it isn't at the moment. In this discussion it really all started from Britain and then added European qualifications in, and it may be in 10 years' time we should start from Europe and add in British qualifications.

Wynne I must say I'm very worried that the whole of this isn't enough, and that everything we've suggested is insufficient to get anywhere near back to full employment with the existing population.

Do you end up in your heart of hearts thinking that we are just going to get net emigration?

Wynne Yes. I'm deeply worried that the thing has now gone too far. I know this is entirely contrary to what people perceive today, because we have just had a very big consumer boom. A lot of people have made a lot of money, more even than they did in 1972-3, but the underlying structural problem has become so large that I'm worried that there now isn't a solution to it. The possibility has to be seriously faced that there will be immiseration and emigration. And people should take that possibility into their minds and not assume there is a solution.

That's left Bob uncharacteristically speechless.

Bob It certainly has.

Wynne We have seen whole regions of this country, for instance parts of Cumbria and parts of Northern Ireland, where industry just came to an end: there was nothing left except production of government services, such as they were, and unemployment benefit. It just finished. That could well happen to the United Kingdom.●

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Andrea Stuart talks to Neneh Cherry

Inner City Mama

For many women, the sight of Neneh Cherry in black leggings and matching top, grooving, hugely pregnant and totally sexy, on *Top Of The Pops*, may well be remembered as the real start of the 1990s.

Born in Sweden to a Swedish mother and African father, Neneh has an impeccable cross-cultural pedigree. her first memory is of a plane journey. Her childhood years, punctuated by trips with step-dad, jazz trumpeter Don Cherry, were spent commuting between her mother's homeland and the Cherrys' New York base.

At 16, Neneh decided to move to Britain where she became part of London's music underground. First, as an 'honorary member' of the quintessential punk girl group, The Slits, and later as part of the anarchic Rip, Rig And Panic, who allowed her quirky voice free reign.

Not 'just another rap artist', her music challenges the 'mine-is-bigger-than-yours' machismo of her male counterparts. Her spare, humorous, often autobiographical lyrics – whether on relationships or having a good time, integrity or babies (she has two) – are concerned with people, the community. They are committed without preaching or being pretentious.

From the bravado of *Buffalo Stance* to the wistful *Manchild*, the songs draw references from all kinds of pop music and their rhythms from a range of musical styles – hip hop, latin beats, funk, soul, reggae – and whether insistent or insinuating, they demand that you move and defy you to be apathetic.

A gorgeous fusion of black and white, Neneh's a conspiracy of contradictions. Ironic, never cynical, she's half urban grit, half designer chic; 'all woman' but still comfortable as 'one of the boys'.

Neneh Cherry manages to be politically credible and seriously pleasurable. Talk about the promise of diversity – she's so hip it hurts. Move over Prince and Madonna, we have found the ultimate icon for these new times.

In the album *Raw Like Sushi* you fuse so many different subjects and styles, that's quite subversive.

The subject matter sort of comes by accident. I clock things that I see and read and when I write I stumble over them again by accident. The most important thing is the simplicity, as soon as I write something that sounds preachy, I'll sit there and sweat over it to make it real and basic rather than sounding like a song's got all the answers.

Knowing the answers is a different thing, but you do ask a lot of the right questions.

People avoid subjects for a lot of reasons. They have ideas of what commercial music should be like and so they restrict themselves. But whenever I come across things that have quality, it excites me. Like when I first came to England and got into reggae music. It wasn't just the message but the feel of victory, like it knew itself.

Growing up listening to salsa, latin music as well as reggae and then punk, you are one of the generation of people who can pull from and respond to world music in a comfortable way.

From the start I've worked with people who went into music with open minds, without confining it. Now there's a new generation of people coming out who've had that exposure. We're crossing a bridge, people are realising that not stereotyping yourself to fit in makes stronger art. Especially in England, because in the music scene the barriers are thinner. You can see that when you look at the charts. In America things are very divided, from the pop chart to the black chart.

What do you make of all the labels that have been attached to you?

I don't take them seriously. People like to think that they know you and what you're going to do next but if you give them exactly what they want then they lose interest, they start resenting you. That's what I kick against.

Being a prisoner of those labels?

Yeah. But I think people are always going to put stamps or labels on me.

Your lyrics are written very much from a woman's point of view. What do you feel about the 'feminist' label?

Feminism's done a lot, it gave woman the strength to stand up and do what she could always do anyway. But I don't call myself a feminist. I don't feel the need, I'm just trying to be a woman.

You've described yourself as a 'womanist'. Do you feel more comfortable there?

Yeah, maybe I've just fallen victim to what the word 'feminist' carries. It just brings a certain picture to mind. I grew up outside of it, I wasn't old enough when feminism was really ranking. But I can see what it was doing, and when I look at the way women had to be to do what they had to do; it meant giving up the woman to a certain extent. We had to prove to the world that we could do what men could do. And now women have reached a stage where we can have children and still work and have the love and have the lives. Though God knows it's still a fight.

The image of you dancing when you were eight months pregnant is probably one of the most liberating images of woman for a long time. It's really important, the idea that you can feel sexy when you're pregnant. That you can be in control of your image.

I decided that it was something that I had to do. Not that I went and got pregnant just to show that! It was just one of those things that happened and at first I thought: 'Oh my God, I'm going to have to wait for a year, people won't be able to handle this.' But then I just decided I was going to deal with it.

I know some women go through hell, and it could have been like that, but with both kids I've been fine. It's a really sensual experience, you know, and it's just been made into this sickness. I knew that getting through with that obstacle sticking out in front, people were going to take me for what I am.

Your songs are about community and relationships, about difficulties and pleasure. *Buffalo Stance*, has a strong sense of feeling good but there's also resistance in it. It's political in the fullest sense of the word.

I don't feel that me and the people who I make music with can really change things or that we have lots of power. It just isn't like that. But we can stimulate and inspire or just make a person get up and go more.

I try to get that energy into all my songs, even into songs about relationships that aren't working. It's up to us to change things and to avoid bitterness. We need love in our lives, even when it's killing us.

Listening to your music, I was thinking that you're very good on boys!

I've studied them. Because I like them.

You're sympathetic but you don't let men off the hook. Your lyrics don't say: 'I'm going to let you get away with behaving like a shit,' but you seem to recognise their own sense of frustration and failure emotionally. Is that because you like them?

I've always liked men. I think that because I like them it's meant that I haven't put up with any of their bullshit. I've known them a little bit. When you like someone, you instantly start treating them a little bit better. Women quite often have to help men into opening up. But I didn't have to go through that with the man I am with now. He almost did it to me, helping me to get stronger.

He pushed me into writing songs. It's not easy working together and having a relationship. A lot of women have had to protect themselves against that, because the man takes everything from them and sucks their creativity out of them.

Do you think that men have changed?

Sure, they've changed a little bit. Women have made them change because we've recognised ourselves and taken a stand. But our society has also been hard on men. I can understand why they've become defensive. To an extent you could say that women have made men into what they are because we've let them get away with a hell of

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a lot in the past. But things are getting better.

That's quite optimistic. A lot of people are saying that men are confused right now and more useless than they were before. But you seem to put yourself in their place in your lyrics, seeing their confusion from the inside.

I think it's because I recognise myself in other things all the time. Although we're different, we can still recognise someone's reaction to something without it being necessarily the way we would react to it.

With people of different colour, or men and women, there's a sense that we have created a world of oppositions. But you use difference constructively, with your parents from different cultures you embody it in a way. Do you think about yourself like that? As reconciling things?

I see myself as black. But musically, people can recognise different things in that. I'd like to think that it's kind of 'colourless' but the root of it, which is probably more black than white, is a very important root.

You seem to have a lot of respect for things green, without jettisoning your concern for people.

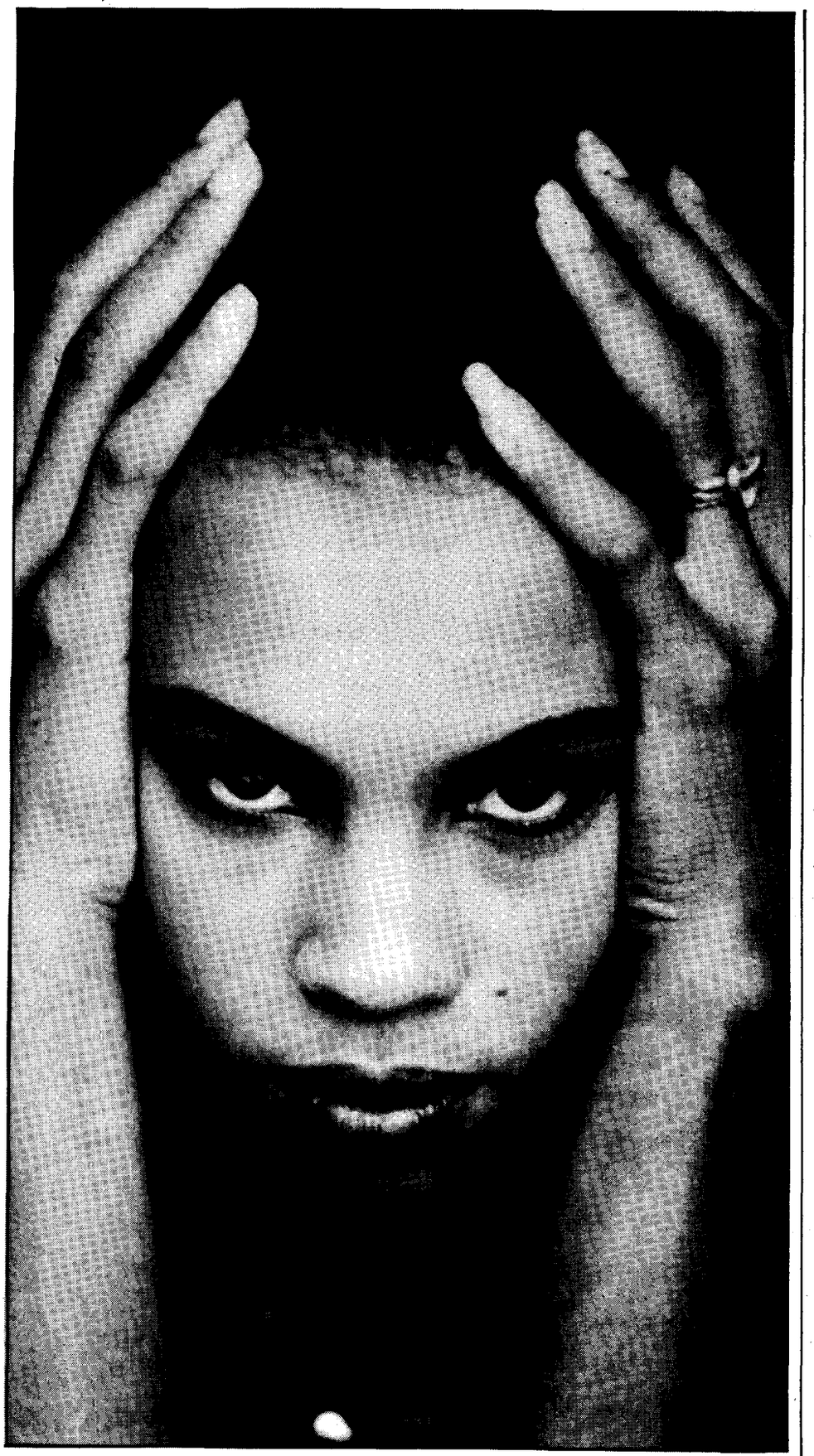
Yeah. I didn't give a damn what I washed my clothes in until a year ago. It wasn't that I didn't care but now there's a sense of urgency. I think it's important for every person to take responsibility, you can't just wait for government. We have to make everything biodegradable. The only bit of plastic I'm for is condoms.

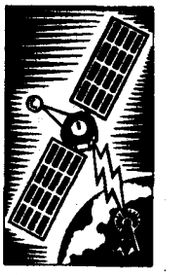
What hopes do you have for the 1990s?

I'm excited about the 90s. I couldn't stand it if I wasn't optimistic. It seems like people are absorbing themselves in better things and waking up to a certain extent.

You're happy?

Yeah! I think I'm really lucky. I don't know what I've lost, if anything. A bit of privacy, I suppose. It's harder to walk down the street now. What I do is important, it's what matters to me but it's not going to last forever. It's exciting but it's only a temporary thing.●





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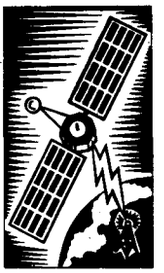
Catherine Treasure finds a special service in Oxford Street

Christian Shopping



Beyond the toy counter, over the drooping heads of jaded present-seekers or through the branches of slowly turning electric plastic christmas trees, you may glimpse a red-haired figure sporting a dog collar, black pullover and Black Watch kilt. It is a Tuesday and this is the Reverend Wendy Brooker, Anglican Deacon.

She took up her post last January, as one of Oxford Street's two industrial chaplains. 'Previous chaplains had kept a low profile and worn plain clothes, but that's not my way. When I first began, one of the assistants exclaimed, "You're one of those women priests!" and I thought, "I should be so lucky!"'.

As a deacon, Wendy has reached the end of the line for women in the Church of England, able to do all that a priest may do, barred only from pronouncing priestly absolution and the blessing of sacraments. It is six years since she first protested at the offensive male exclusivity of the Church; faced with this, like many other women in her position, she realised she must develop her own kind of ministry, parallel but different. As a woman, she'd done a lot of shopping in her time, so she began as a store chaplain in her local shoppingcentre in Harrow, north-west London, which led to her placement on Oxford Street.

She also helps with Sunday services in a Harrow church, but feels this is a comparatively small ministry, divorced from the wider world. 'My ministry is to those for whom organised religion is largely irrelevant. I'm trying to build bridges between the Church and the workplace by being a spiritual presence where most people see God as being shut up in churches.'

Though much of her work in the store is pastoral, she hopes it is also much more than that: 'It is involvement of the theology of God in the workplace, which automatically brings in issues such as seven-day trading, racism, the effects of out-of-town shopping centres, the morality of credit.' Present by permission of the store, she is paid by the Church, and her status, independent of the management, makes her a better confidante: staff would rather discuss their problems with someone outside the organisation, with whom confidentiality is assured.

She roams the store, encouraging people of all faiths and of none not to give in to a system which relies on employees' goodwill and low wages, to take the time off to which they are entitled, reminding them that overtime is not compulsory. 'I also spend a lot of time affirming that employees are doing their best in a difficult situation, when they feel management takes them for granted and that profit is more important than their well-being.'

She is a listening ear. 'In a shop this size, assistants can become numbers.' The youngest come straight from school and have concerns ranging from loneliness on leaving home to how to work alongside gay colleagues. 'Language is very important because Church jargon alienates. I'm not evangelising; we might not even mention God.'

The store chaplain can be a bridge between the management and the shop floor, monitoring the climate of feeling on matters such as pay and equal opportunities. Wendy sees the women there as a 'living expression of the female in God'. When management bewail the decline in the workforce, she asks when they are going to provide crèches for working women. 'These stores would fall apart without married women. What sort of career structure are they providing for them?' It's true that the top management is currently always male, but since it's assumed that women *will* soon have equal opportunities, she finds the store more comfortable than the Church. And she finds many of the women and men about her are pleased to see her in a traditionally male role: 'They're rooting for me, regardless of theology.'

The rest of her week is spent on the other part of her work, as an industrial chaplain developing an understanding of tourism, especially in London, and trying to pass on grassroots opinion when the opportunity arises. Sadly, she finds the Church at large shows little interest in her work; most people see spiritual and secular matters as entirely separate. She and the 10 other chaplains in the London Industrial Chaplaincy regularly hold seminars on topics from shopping-hours to the effects of the Channel Tunnel development. She is part of a nationwide network of chaplains in the retail trade and hopes to develop a chaplaincy in tourism, which will soon be Britain's largest industry.

Wendy Brooker: 'One of those women priests'

Though not formally involved in the store's Employment Training Scheme, she takes an interest in its trainees. In the carpet department she stops to talk to one of them and enquires as to the progress of his current project. He in turn unrolls the latest delivery, an Afghan rug featuring up-to-the-minute motifs from local life: machine guns, tanks and helicopters.

Wendy admits there is a certain moral dilemma in being a store chaplain, comparable to that of a military chaplain: how does the Christian message of simplicity find a place in a store full of such opulence? Even those retailing expensive clothes need pastoral care. So too do the customers, but they are not her primary concern here. They periodically ask her for directions for the loo, and she doesn't mind, but it does make her wonder: 'I mean, how many shop assistants do you see wearing a dog collar?'●

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Shelter Give us a break!... ..... Declaration

We declare our anger at the growing numbers of young people who are homeless.

Many have no choice but to live independently, yet they cannot afford even basic accommodation.

We demand that young people are given the means to help them find somewhere to live which meets their needs.

We are asking that young people are given a break.

We demand :
All young people living independently who are not on YTS or in employment should receive Income Support and Housing Benefit at the same rate as over 25 year olds.

Grants should be made available to enable young people to move into a place they can call home.

Income support should be paid in advance.

The homelessness laws should be made to cover young people.

More homes at affordable rents should be provided by socially responsible landlords for young people.

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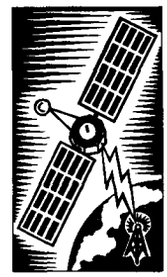
Martin Pumphrey samples a round of lager ads

Lager Wars

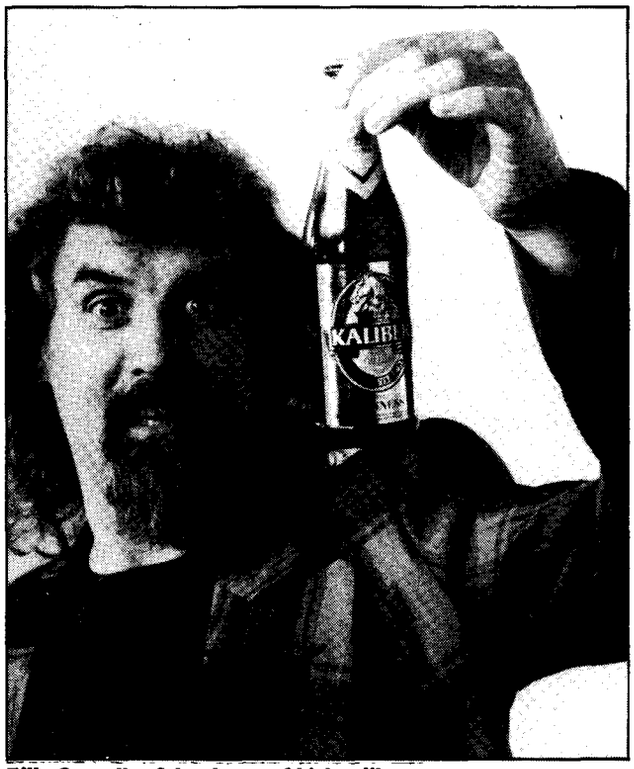


Here they come again – the lager ads. Look sharp. It's the Christmas rush. Time was when it was a pint of beer – and a half of lager for the girlfriend. No problem. Now it's lagers all round and a mutiple-choice exam. What'll it be? Export, Special, Standard, Premium, strong, extra strong, low alcohol, American, German, French, Norwegian, Swedish, Spanish, Australian, Japanese, draught, bottled, flip-top or can...?

Bitters and milds have been the traditional staples of the British beer market but in the last 20 years British brewers have had to face a challenge from overseas producers of lager at least as intense as the one faced by the British car industry. And they have faced it with as little support and success. Overseas lagers have substantially won out.

Between 1972 and 1987 there were some 275 lager launches. In 1969, lager accounted for 10% of British beer sales; two years ago, it was 41%. In 1985 the total British beer market was worth something like £7.5 billion and in that year Carlsberg and Heineken alone spent £15m on advertising. In the face of such an onslaught, some British brewers responded with their own lagers, light ales and low-alcohol beers; the majority cut their losses. Increasingly they have either committed their production to brewing 'foreign' lagers under licence or withdrawn from production in favour of arrangements to distribute foreign lager imports.

To consolidate the shift, the free marketeers got in on the act last summer. Lord Young's enthusiastic response to the UK Monopolies and Mergers Commission's report on the UK brewing industry was taken as signalling a political drive to loosen the grip of 'the big six' British brewers on their tied pubs – to open access to the British beer market and give consumers 'more choice'. Taken together with the extension of pub opening hours in 1987, that promises more time to consume, more punters, more choice, more lagers, and ultimately more lager ads.



Billy Connolly: A hard man of high calibre

Because, of course, what has been created by all this is an advertisers' paradise – a situation that has required the almost infinite segmentation of the market to make room for everyone. What began in the 1970s as a fight between foreign lagers and British beers has become in the 80s a full-scale advertising exercise in redefining British beer-drinking habits.

At street level the results have been mixed. As advertisers have worked to draw Britain into the global lager economy, they have had to redefine a key social institution – the British pub and the culture associated with it. This has made many pubs brighter and more welcoming places to drink, meet and eat in. But it has also generated the glitz and pastiche that has changed the meaning of 'the local' and undermined the class, neighbourhood and regional structures it traditionally serviced.

Representations of masculinity are a key issue here. Lager advertising has created its consumer versions of Britain's contemporary worlds in terms of a set of redefined masculinities. Traditionally pubs have always been intricately associated with patriarchal power and few women have reason to be unambiguously sentimental about the demise of that particular reality. Structured around misogyny, where beer-drinking sorted the men from the boys and the boys from the girls, the pub has provided a unifying focus for British masculinities that suggested a communality between men that transcended (even as it marked out) class and regional divisions.

Targeted as they are at 18-35 year-old male drinkers, lager ads have substantially challenged all that. As they have sought to identify ever finer market divisions, they have put paid to the notion that 'a man's a man for all that'. Lager ads project a proliferation of consumer masculinities – all credible, all claiming distinctness. No single manly essence now, but different models of masculine identity. Jack the Lad and the cunning young men, the aspiring yuppies in their baggy clothes, the sharp suits with money to spend, the trendies and the rich who need designer bottles as ID supports, even the low-alcohol hardmen so tough they can afford to be as funny as Billy Connolly.

Lager ads in the 1980s have quite overtly attacked and ridiculed traditional versions of masculinity – and advertising for the traditional bitters has responded in kind. 'Not all flowers are pansies' jeered the Whitbread ad last summer, invoking homophobia in its embarrassingly dated attack on lager-drinking wimps. 'Unspoilt by progress' claimed Bank's bitter in short-hand recognition of the massive challenge the post-modern lager world presents to the sensitivities of the traditional male.

So here they come again – the lager ads. In some senses indeed they speak about progressive change. Appropriation, however, is their particular skill. In subtle ways they have taken over feminist critiques to mark out consumer masculinities while at the same time reasserting all too familiar patterns of masculine behaviour. Lager-drinking is cosmopolitan. Male lager drinkers, the ads tell us, know the world has changed. Macho doesn't pull birds anymore. Lager men laugh at themselves, inhabit parodies of traditional masculinity, aren't bound by the 'boring' restraints of class or regional identities. Lager men are zany and have fun. Be subtle. Be sharp. Let her buy the drinks. Macho non-macho. Who'd give a XXXX for anything else?

Quietly, complexly, contradictorily, lager ads are reflecting transformations in many areas of British life and they pose difficult questions. They speak a vision of internationalism that is wholly white; they assist in that eradication of the cultural practices that historically were the solid bedrock of class and regional identities and whose passing now threatens what once seemed most stable in the Left's project; they are instrumental in the reshaping of masculinity demanded by late-20th century consumer capitalism that is at once so profound and so partial.

So be a skolar. Give them a thought. It's new times at the bar.●

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The Rushdie affair has changed **Yasmin Alibhai**'s life

A Member No More

Three profoundly important things have happened in my life these past months. The Rushdie affair sent tremors through it which have not yet subsided. I stopped working for a magazine which proclaims itself to be a voice of the Left. My very traditional Asian husband ran out on me, and a child at the threshold of puberty, to seek his happiness in the proverbial young, blonde student.

The shock and dismay discharged by each of these events has been harrowing. What made it all even more intolerable was how little you were able or how unwilling to understand any of it. The 'you' I refer to – a technique I learned from Salman Rushdie when he did his *Opinions* slot on Channel 4 – is the white, liberal leftie. Your colonial history is with you still. Your oppressive certainties have failed both you and me.

This article is in no way meant as a vindication of the actions of religious fanatics who want Rushdie dead or of those who have used the anguish of the Muslim community to further entrench their powerful, religiously autocratic positions. I come from a sect of Islam whose life force has been the tension between evolution and change and timeless truths. I admire deeply most of what Rushdie has written. In some ways, parts of *The Satanic Verses* most clearly encapsulate some of the turmoil I am describing.

But I do not espouse the freedom-of-speech principle. I do not believe that in the immature and vicious world in which we live such a freedom exists. Nor do I believe that it should. I do not believe that Nazis, the National Front and child pornographers have the right to have their voices heard. I also believe that, living as we do as part of a despised and endangered minority in this country, we have certain responsibilities to ourselves.

Let me begin with *The Satanic Verses* and the forces it has unleashed. After the book-burnings in Bradford – a perfectly legitimate mode of protest for a group of people who had tried all other means of redress by that time – spectres were raised. British Muslims were all barbaric, all in the thrall of wicked, old men who orchestrated violent young ones while swathed, silent women suffered in back rooms. The images intensified after the death threat, which was issued by a foreign leader in the throes of political problems of his own, not by a British Muslim. How easily it all became one problem, which was going to crush all that was held dear by you in this country.

You could not see that this community was complex, different, sometimes confused, and a product of cultural and historical crosswinds, just as yours was. You could not disentangle the bravado and anger from the realities underneath those statements. Recently, on a London local radio station, Mrs Thatcher was voted the most popular candidate to burn on a bonfire. Many calls that came in were drenched in hatred for her. Yet nobody has so far written an editorial suggesting that the capital is threatening the freedom of the nation.

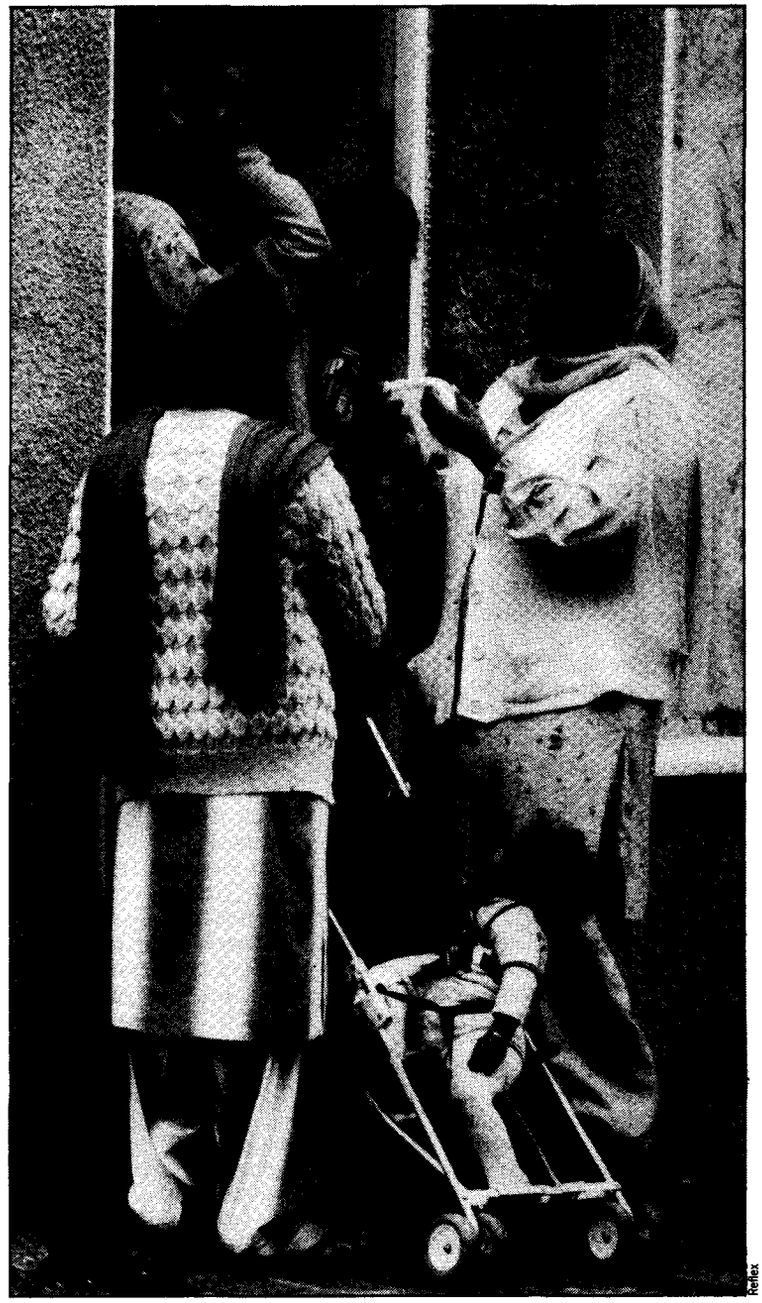
Suddenly it was acceptable, even brave, to be self-protective and abhorently nationalistic. Anthony Burgess pontificated: 'We have put up with their hallal meat, we do not have to put up with this.' Who was this 'we', I asked. Fay Weldon (besides wanting to make me salute the flag and throw out multiculturalism) wanted to rescue me and my sisters into a life like hers. Did I really want to be Ms Weldon when I grew up? Why was there not a quiver of anticipation or temptation at the prospect?

Roy Jenkins, architect of the golden notion of cultural diversity with mutual respect and the race relations legislation, shook his head and regretted that so many Muslims were 'allowed' to settle in some cities in the north. There were goodies and baddies. No alternative voices or dilemmas were heard for many months and they were soon forgotten.

Many Muslims supported Rushdie's right to publish. Most did not want him killed. Those who wanted the book banned were not merely voices of barbarism. The Muslim reactions were, at least partly, the result of years of negative image-making and discrimination in the West.

The selective zeal and power of the literary glitterati was astounding and contrasted dramatically with the voices of the young Muslims I have interviewed around Britain in recent months. Where, asked Ayisha, a young Muslim school assistant in Bradford, was this zeal when, a few weeks after the death threat to Rushdie, her young daughter was shut inside a dustbin with a savage dog by some teenagers yelling 'bloody Muslim'?

Why have the Ms Weldons not bombarded the world where racists burn families to death and where living behind boarded-up windows is a way of life? It is not just a matter of either/or, but it does grab the throat when one right is elevated into a



Reflex

Muslim women want to change their communities from within

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religion and others have never even merited a glance.

Talking to other Muslims around the country, I found that other realisations had begun to form. They are things that you must start listening to. 'It is our Brixton,' says Hafiz, 18, with a budding career in a building society. 'They took Afro-Caribbeans seriously after the riots, didn't they? Well, now they're going to take us seriously.' Javez describes how Muslims were treated by the police who called them 'Pakis' and laid into them. 'When a Muslim does anything wrong, they say we are all like that.'

These young people are worried about senseless violence. Many deeply fear that a maniac will kill Rushdie and put all their lives and futures at risk. Law and order matter deeply to the Muslims of Bradford. The mother of a young man who was arrested wept on the phone to me, saying she could never forgive her son for the shame he had brought on the family. It is something the youngsters understand completely.

Halim (not his real name) speaks with a frightening bitterness. He was one of the Bradford 12, the case which first put Bradford on the map: 'We live in this meaningless democracy and we are nothing. We do not belong, they will not let us belong. They think we are monkeys, not people. We should get out.'

The Rushdie affair has invoked in these young people a series of passionate responses which go beyond the issue of the book. They now know where they want to belong: it is to Islam. They complain that the white society around them has completely failed to understand how 'Rushdie has burnt the hearts of Muslims'.

They all want the book banned. Only one of the group of young people I met, an 11-year old, said he wanted Rushdie dead. They describe how hard it is for them to be with their white friends because they don't understand this. Racial insults are increasingly hurled at Muslims on the streets and in schools. But why, I ask, are they choosing to stay with this demanding religion and lifestyle?

My education begins in earnest. Most talk about the greatness of Islam and the way it teaches you discipline, respect for your parents and what the call 'the right way to live'. Their maturity is deeply impressive as are some of the values they have clearly absorbed. In a society where one holds a stereotypical view that all teenagers smash through life creating an odour of thoughtlessness and selfishness, these young people seem like a godsend. And what they say is also beginning to mean a lot to me the longer I live here.

The young girls and women I meet are similarly positive about their religion, if less uncritical of the traditions which restrict their freedom. But they, too, speak of conformity and not rebellion. Most of all they want to change their communities in their way, from within, and not be dictated to by you and yours. Even apostates are complicated about their allegiances. A woman who teaches at a polytechnic defends Rushdie with a passion. She says she would like to murder the mullahs. But even she feels that the ignorance in the white community about the diversity and richness of Islam is shameful and inexcusable.

So where do I place myself? And where do you place yourselves in the midst of this moral chaos? There is much in what I have been forced to reassess about my oriental identity that I do not want to lose. There is something deeply moving and necessary about having such a strong sense of the sacred. There must be, otherwise why do so many people go constantly in search of tinpot gurus and plastic religions?

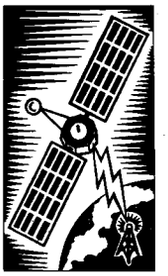
I feel angered by the overwhelming white hostility to my people. I cannot collude with that. Nor can I forgive you your blind indifference which is forcing even those from within the communities who want to instigate changes into toeing a traditional line in order to protect their people.

Even those of you who are trying to get to grips with these explosions talk in terms of 'tolerance'. Tolerance implies putting up with something which is inherently wrong or strange in some way. Is that the best you can do? Why has the Rushdie affair not moved you to reconsider your own civilisation and whether it deserves to be classed as a force of progress and light?

These questions became increasingly important for me as I worked at *New Statesman And Society*. My experiences while working there do not negate my genuine admiration for many aspects of the magazine where I was the 'Race' editor. The only black journalist on the staff, the cold isolation got worse. What the Rushdie affair had exposed was true of all black issues, I felt. Race issues would take second place to almost anything else. The marginalisation and subtle personal degradation was too high a price to pay, so I left. I would not have taken any of this for a moment from a declared Tory, of course. How long can blacks keep on protecting these hypocrisies of the Left? When will black consciousness begin to really transform the Left's political consciousness?

Now I want to break the tyranny of impersonal discourse which has been defined for so long as the only acceptable convention of public communication. Living in a pluralist society in the future will, after all, mean all kinds of organic changes for all of us. The established white, male modes of communication need to be challenged now. The enlightenment with its deification of rationality and its negation of the emotional and spiritual life may have finally run its course.

And so finally, and briefly, to my divorce. An event which I could only interpret in terms of my own cultural baggage and which this society, through its courts and its pundits, interprets entirely differently. I married for life. I had a child for life. I do not believe my own needs override the needs of my child. I do not accept that the father of my son had the right to do what he did. I do not understand and I do not wish to do so.



I am told that this is old-fashioned, unrealistic, unreasonable; that divorce is a way of life; that marriage is something that you break at will; that the centre of the universe is your own life; that I am wrong to be matrimonially fundamentalist in my views and anyway it's uncool from somebody as 'modern' as me. I cannot and will not buy these precepts. I will not bring up my son to follow them, although being born here he is more yours than mine.

'Even those of you who are trying to get to grips with these explosions talk in terms of "tolerance". Tolerance implies putting up with something'

I shall not be renewing my (associate) membership of your club any longer. I do not belong. As a black radical all I have ever really been to you is a parrot perching uneasily on the edge of things. Cute whenever I could mimic your words and give them colour, a nuisance when I chose to squawk on about things you hadn't initiated, taught me or defined. Having dislocated myself so thoroughly from your cultural, political, social life, where do I go from here except the wilderness?

Consider the implications of my experiences in the last 18 months, that have pushed me into taking this position. If I, an almost-agnostic, almost-feminist, nicely-toasted, pleasantly-exotic, Eng. Lit., Oxbridge, socialist – nurtured in your image and often well-loved by you – can no longer function in your world, what about those angry young Muslim men in Bradford, the Bangladeshi children in Tower Hamlets and the Afro-Caribbeans in Notting Hill Gate and Liverpool? Those whose lives and struggles you have patronised or ignored.●

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Jenni Moore interviews Nanci Griffith

Stormy Weather

There are dreamers and there are the disillusioned. Somewhere between the two exists Nanci Griffith, musical chronicler of the times. The *NME* describes her as 'one of the most important singer/songwriters of this decade'. With the release of her most recent album *Storms* to critical acclaim, we see a departure in the style of her music from Nashville songstress into the mainstream.

The exact appeal of Nanci Griffith is difficult to define. It is impossible to categorise or pigeon-hole her music. Her uniqueness lies in her eclectic style: a fusion of folk, country, hillbilly and traditional Texas blues. This gives her songs an almost seamless quality, not only in their breadth of style but also because her music draws as much from the 60s and 70s as the present decade. The lyrics are rooted in the experiences of particular characters and places but the themes themselves are universal. Her popularity undoubtedly lies in her crossover appeal to an audience of all ages, but it is the loyalty and devotion among her fans which gives her cult status.

What strikes you first when meeting Nanci is how quietly spoken she is. Her waif-like appearance suggests vulnerability. But the second thing you notice is her sheer determination. After 12 years in the business, and eight albums to date, she is not a woman to compromise or bend to musical trends. And while overnight success may have eluded her, doing it her own way has brought bonuses: 'Longevity has always been important to me, to create work that can stand on its own two feet. I have been allowed the creative freedom to do whatever I want to do.'

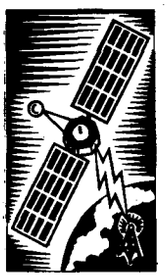
Singers like Nanci are a rarity – or even an anomaly – in an industry where packaging and marketability are often more important than the product itself. If Wendy James and Kylie Minogue sell records on the strength of their bimbette image, Nanci sells records without the hype and the aid of an image-making machine. She belongs to that tradition of female singer/songwriters, from Joni Mitchell in the 60s to Tracey Chapman in the 80s, who are taken seriously by both the press and the public.

The 80s has witnessed the return of the protest song with the emergence of Chapman, Michelle Shocked and Suzanne Vega who fuse personal politics with social awareness, the intimate with the external. Although Nanci does not see herself purely in those terms she agrees that 'even my love songs are political, championing women who have triumphed over bad situations'. Asking her who her early influences were and which female singers she admires brings the immediate response: 'Loretta Lynn. Up until the time that Loretta came along the protest songs by female singers were somewhat unreachable. Loretta was nobody's victim. She brought it home to the household and made women realise that you could actually live your life that way.' She also recognises the ambiguities of style in contemporary singers like Madonna, who juxtaposes a pop image with songs about self-determination: 'Song's like *Express Yourself* are political, but how many people actually listen to the lyrics? She's a good lyricist and songwriter but because of the way she is presented she is not taken seriously.'

Nanci's latest single *It's A Hard Life Wherever You Go* moves away from the ethereal quality of her former singles to a hard-edged realism. As protest songs go this is the real McCoy. It's a damning indictment of racism and bigotry as they effect our children, drawing parallels between the redneck homes of Nanci's native Texas and the barbed wire streets of Belfast: 'I think of myself as a journalist in music. My country is responsible for a lot of evil in the world. I can either remain a back-seat driver or I can do something about it.'

Throughout her songs she writes about struggle; whether in personal relationships or society in general. As a Nashville singer she struggled against the record company marketing her as a stereotypical female country singer, all rhinestone and 'Stand By Your Man'. 'I have had conflicts where I had to stand my ground. Occasionally this has meant that the record company would not promote my records. You know, "If you won't play my game I won't play yours."'

Nanci Griffith: Last Of The True Believers



Although Nanci's songs speak more to women than men, she seems uneasy when asked if she considers herself a feminist. 'The part of the women's movement that I've really got involved with is pro-choice and benefits for shelters for battered women. I was a battered wife. This has been a very important cause for me, to provide a place for women to go. But I think that the only way to be a feminist is by living an example and if my life is an example of feminism then I probably am.'

Ultimately it is her lyrics which win you over. The songs are poignant and visual three-minute short stories which call to mind the work of Raymond Carver or John Steinbeck. They create a world in which there is hardship and heartache but always hope. Nanci doesn't believe in accepting the role of victim whether in her private or public life: 'I always write about characters who have resilience, who have the ability to overcome their problems. I really believe in love and in life. I believe in people's ability to make things better'.●

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Gorbachev is no revolutionary, argues **John Lloyd**

Limited Revolt

This is an optimistic book: too optimistic. In one sense, that is not its fault, in another sense, it is. That part of **The Soviet Revolution** *(Jon Bloomfield ed, Lawrence and Wishart, pbk £8.95)* which is out of its control is the fact that the Soviet 'revolution' (bad word) is itself out of control, and thus moves more rapidly and erratically than a book with publishing deadlines of some months back can cope with.

In the case of an essay by Roy Medvedev of September 1982, looking ahead to the successors to Brezhnev, we get the interest of seeing foresight in retrospect: as when Medvedev writes that 'the new leaders at all levels of party and government will certainly be vigorous supporters of socialist and marxist ideology. But they will...be pragmatists rather than ideologues.' But when the same man is interviewed by Monty Johnstone in the summer of 1988, his comments read blandly and his forecasts are often wrong – as when he predicts that Boris Yeltsin is 'broken as a politician and cannot lead any trend within the party'.

Often, too, the writers compound the time problem by concentrating overly on *intention* as against achievement. In an otherwise useful essay on 'Democracy and Civil Society', Nick Lampert, who edits the admirable *Detente* magazine, asserts that 'the direction of political change points towards a new relationship between the Soviet state and its citizens in which a more secure civil society could emerge. In this case the "system" will no longer be the same.'

Perhaps. But he might, if writing now, be more careful to stress that none of the presaged constitutional changes have yet to come before the Supreme Soviet and that some have not even been drafted; that there is a profound struggle now going on between reformist legal experts and obstructive ministries and Party officials; that the Party remains dominant and will stay so. The limits of freedom, compared to societies where there *is* a civil society, are clearly close and always in the Party's power to move this way or that.

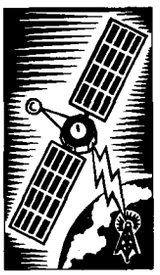
Which brings me to the part of the body which the editor and authors *can* reach: that is, the overall conception of the Gorbachev reforms. Editor Bloomfield, whose credentials in opposing neo-stalinism in Eastern Europe are as good as anyone's on the Left, is overkeen and undercritical in his introduction and in his concluding essay to press the case that Gorbachev both intends to be and can be a complete break with the past, and that it is only reactionaries in the West who cannot see it.

To be clear: Gorbachev represents a change of enormous importance, which demonstrates by its flexibility and ability to descale the Soviet threat (there was one: there still is) just how dangerous that threat was, and just how much responsibility it carried for the perpetuation of an unstable balance of terror. He has de-ideologised Soviet foreign policy by striking out the doctrine of the international class struggle, the ideological lynchpin of the Soviet imperium everywhere. He has opened up issues in the domestic economy and in society which have liberated at least the intellectual classes, without satisfying the working classes – as the essays by Archie Brown, Stephen White, Julian Cooper and Denis Ogden (all sovietologists) and by Neal Ascherson and Martin Walker (two fine journalists) attest.

But why should any Western government simply accept the achievements on trust? Is it reactionary to analyse the reasons why the new Soviet leadership takes this line, what its chances of success are and whether or not it can remain in office to pursue a line which runs so strongly counter to every previous Soviet administration and still offends powerful sectors of the Party establishment?

I would prefer the British government to be closer to the German foreign minister's view of change: that is, to acknowledge that the postwar settlement over Europe is shifting radically, and to develop public debate and policy responses shaped to respond, rather than merely admire it or cluck at it. But I do not think that care can be equated with reaction.

John Morris



Further, the essay by Fedor Burlatsky on 'The state after Stalin' contains a number of formulations which find more than one echo in other essays in the volume. Burlatsky believes that the struggle between 'war communism' and 'New Economic Policy (NEP) communism' is one which has continued in a largely covert way throughout the Soviet period – war communism, which became stalinism, drawing its strength from 'a backward consciousness and...the authoritarian-patriarchal political culture of the masses'.

This is probably right, but Burlatsky is performing here an ideological rather than an analytical task. He, and other perestroiki, are concerned to put NEP-leninism on an unassailable pedestal, so that Gorbachev can clothe himself in the legitimacy of the revolution's genius. It may be politically essential, but if so, it has quite defined limits. First, it ensures that the party remains monopolistic; second, that flexibilty of thought and action are hobbled by the fact that Lenin never intended the Soviet economy to be other than state-owned and directed. He spoke well of co-operatives in his last years, but neither he nor any other leading Bolshevik had anything but horror for a market system.

My view is that Gorbachev's ideological limits will stop him from achieving any of his domestic goals, and will imperil his magnificent international achievements. It may be that he has gone as far as he can go: that no general secretary can do more than he can at this stage. But if that is so, then we are witnessing a state where totalitarian communism has been substantially moderated but no institutions – I include the popular fronts in the republics – which could carry a new political system have yet been allowed to properly develop. While one-party rule lasts, all the huge gains are at hazard at any time. That is the best short explanation for refusing the title 'revolution' to Gorbachev's courageous reformism.●

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Gordon McLennan's left books

Glasgow Ranger

Gordon McLennan joined the Communist Party in 1939. This month he is giving up his position as general secretary of the Party, having held the post since 1975. He talks to Chris Granlund about the way reading influenced his political development.

I grew up in a typical, large, working-class Glasgow family. My father was a shipyard worker, he met my mother when he went to work at Cammell Laird's in Birkenhead before the first world war. I had six brothers and a sister, I was the seventh child.

Through the 20s and 30s I grew up in this marvellous family in houses always too small for us, so there was no place to sit and read quietly. I didn't do much reading of a serious nature at that time but there was a great respect for books and knowledge.

In 1939, I joined the Young Communist League (YCL), that was a natural product of my background. My father was a militant socialist, one of my brothers was a member of the YCL. My mother was a church-goer until the last days of her life but she joined the Party after 1940 and became a marvellously active comrade. The Church of Scotland and socialism have always been closely intertwined. I was in the Boys' Brigade and played football and went to camp, but by the age of 14 it was palling on me a bit.

An important activity for many of us at that time was to go hiking, climbing in Loch Lomond, 'out the loch' as we used to say, and 'up Ben Lomond'. That was a great time for political discussion and talking about books and revolutionary politics. A lot of the lads and girls were very well read.

From that time on, for about 10 years, I read everything that I could get my hands on of a political, revolutionary character and also the more romantic kind of novel. I remember a number of books that made a great impact on me in those days. There were the Left Book Club's publications: *The Mortal Storm*, *Fallen Bastions*, *Man's Worldly Goods*, *Red Star Over China*. These were political books with a vision and a certain heroic position against fascism and war, which was very much in the consciousness of all of us.

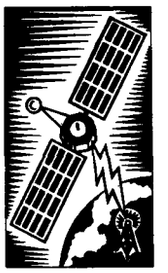
Immediately following that, during the second world war, I read a number of books by wonderful American authors. Steinbeck's *Grapes Of Wrath*, Hemingway's *For Whom The Bell Tolls*, Sinclair Lewis's *It Can't Happen Here*, Theodore Dreiser, John Dos Passos, all of these made a great impression with their portrayal of the importance of finding a different, humanitarian way of organising society.

During all this time, I was starting to study the classics of marxism in the YCL. In 1939 or 1940, we studied the Little Lenin Library: Marx and Engels, Lenin and later on a bit of Stalin. So along with the romantic novels, there was also this theoretical tradition.

Before I became an apprentice engineer, I worked in a printing factory in Glasgow. They seemed to me to be very cultured and enormously well-read. I remember putting out the plates to be run in the machines and getting breaks in between. I'd sit in that plate shop reading and reading and these fellows would be feeding me with books, saying, 'You should read this,' and 'You must read that'.

Out of those books, I suppose Jack London made the greatest impression, *The Iron Wheel*, *The People Of The Abyss*. Two of his less political books, *The Sea Wolf* and *White Fang* were marvellous pieces of adventure writing. His work made you decide which side of the fence you were on and gave inspiration. I never found any conflict between these romantic novels and the theoretical work.

There's one book that I've remembered all my life, *The Scalpel And The Sword* about Norman Bethune. He was the most famous surgeon in the world for treating TB, which wasn't treated with drugs at that time. He describes a day when he was driving through Toronto or Montreal in 1933. He got into a traffic jam behind a great demonstration of unemployed workers. This was something that he had never come across and he asked himself why people should be unemployed. He realised that for every person he saved from TB, hunger and poverty were killing a hundred. He decided to use his skills to change that. He joined the Spanish International Brigade in the Civil War and then went to China in the late-30s. He is one of the few honorary foreigners of the Chinese Revolution and is buried in China. I found it a wonderful book.



In 1956, when the Soviet tanks went into Hungary, I was very involved politically and emotionally. I was not moved to leave the Party, as many of the comrades were. It was a testing and traumatic time for all of us, but I think I was in the Communist Party for different reasons from many of those who left. For although I recognised and admired the heroic deeds of many national Parties throughout the world, I was in the Communist Party for reasons to do with my experience in Glasgow, to do with the nature of working-class life. I was in the Party to change the reality of working-class life in Scotland and Britain.

Through the 60s and 70s, I learned a lot from the various social movements as they emerged: the women's movement, the peace movement, anti-apartheid. One book that helped on the question of women was Virginia Woolf's *A Room Of One's Own*. But I also remember some meetings at which comrades who were involved in the women's movement wanted to talk about how the Party should respond to these developments. At one of those meetings, I was not very in tune and I remember the women comrades didn't like my speech. I didn't understand why. But I understood after the meeting. They made it very clear to me!

But I never found it difficult to bring the personal into politics. I have always thought of politics as a very personal thing. Political discussions do get very personal. You can say harsh things but still be friends and comrades, especially in the Glasgow working-class movement!●

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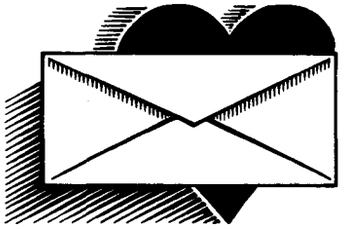

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● **Norwich:** New Times Day Event, themes include work, health, personal politics, environmentalism. Takes place at Wensum Lodge, King St, Norwich on Saturday December 2nd, 10-4pm. Organised by Norwich CP, in association with Marxism Today. Details from Norwich New Times, 37 Russel Grove, Norwich, Norfolk.

● **Sheffield:** Sheffield South CP, are now organising a Marxism Today Weekend Event. Entitled, "What's Left for Tomorrow: Social Living in the 1990s" it will take place 20/21 April, 1990. The theme will be the reconstructing of the social, and the regeneration of socialism. Offers of help and ideas are welcome from Marxism Today readers. Further info: John Salway, 100 Wayland Rd, Sheffield S11 8YE. Tel: (074) 680874.

● **Scotland:** Major Weekend Event being planned on the Scottish Economy now postponed to 1990. Details: What's Left Collective, 13 Hampden Terrace, Glasgow G42. Tel: (041) 649 7433.

● **Sheffield University:** New Marxism Today Discussion Group recently formed. For details of meetings contact Dave Dickinson, 48 Grange Crescent, Sharrow, Sheffield S11 8AY.

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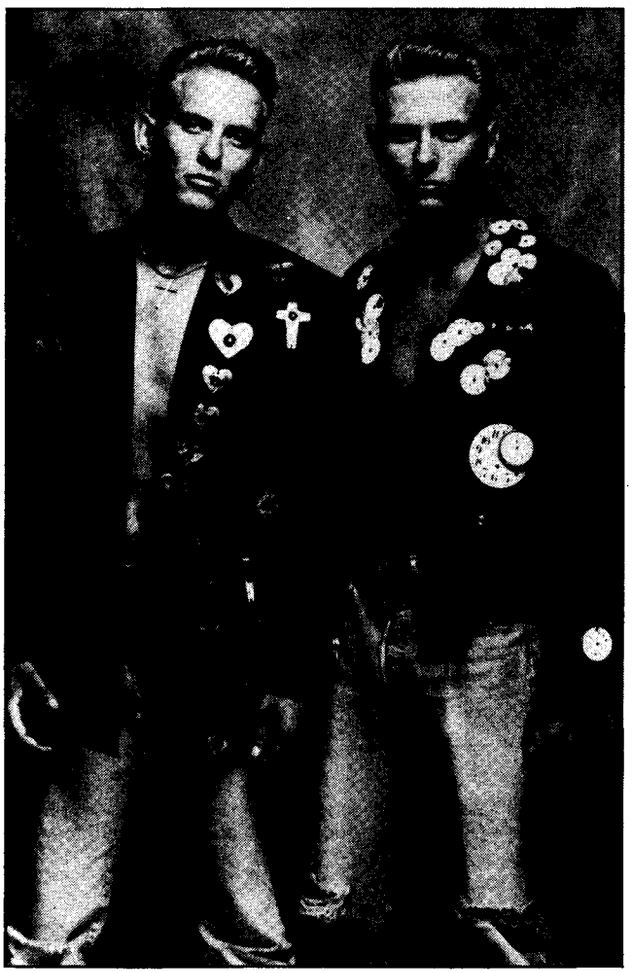
Bros



Bros: Have they stopped being famous?

A couple of weeks ago, the Bros bros were guests on *Juke Box Jury*, sitting in judgment on the latest pop releases. Out of the jukebox popped a song by actor Bruce Willis. Bland, harmless nonsense which will sell, courtesy of the actor's fame and a slick video. Host Jools Holland prepared to press the 'Hit' button and get on with it. Then Matt (or Luke or both) piped up, raging with indignation. 'It makes the public think that you can sprinkle magic dust over anyone and they can become a recording artist. It makes me really anti it.'

Anti what exactly? Magic dust? A quick rewind to 1986. There's a long-haired glam-rock pop group called Gloss, and they're going nowhere. A man comes into the room, Tom Watkins, manager of the hugely (really very hugely) successful Pet Shop Boys. He cuts their hair, he rips their jeans and he sprinkles a little bit of that old magic dust over them. *When Will I Be Famous?* they asked. What did they know?

'Almost inevitably, it must come down to sex. But it's a puzzling sex, a weird anodyne asexuality. Look, but don't touch. A safe teeny-sex for a safe-sex age'

Bros. What are Bros? It's too easy to say that they were manufactured. How many attempts have been made to cop a quick buck out of a teen sensation? And how many have failed? What's the appeal?

There's the image: a standard uniform – carefully-ripped jeans, t-shirt, neatly cropped hair. Perfect for the kids to adopt, not too expensive and it won't offend the mums. The music is pop, good pop. There are (at least) three tunes which easily passed the hummability test and could hold their own in any (well, most) pop company.

Almost inevitably it must come down to sex. But it's a puzzling sex. Sure, they're hunky enough – great bone structure – but it's a non-sex type of sex. There's no grit or macho pouting (Wham!) and there's no boy-next-door cutesyness (The Monkees, Haircut 100). It's not happy fun (Bay City Rollers) and it's not treacly niceness (Donny Osmond). It's a weird anodyne asexuality. Look, but don't touch. A safe teeny-sex for the safe-sex age?

But it's more brutal than that. There's no warmth, no softness. It's a cold-eyed steely blond look. They're handsome rather than good looking. Take them out of their ripped jeans and they'd pass (a shade too convincingly) for members of the Hitler Youth.

There's also a strange streak of narcissism. Luke/Matt. Matt/Luke. It was no accident that poor Craig (an original Bros, following in the great pop tradition of silent bassists) got booted out. Tales of ME and £1m pay-offs apart, Craig just never fitted in. How can you have a Bros who isn't a bros?

After a bad start (they were rejected by the mighty Stock, Aitken and Waterman organisation), the whole ball game has been smartly handled. The tabloids loved them. Matt had a love affair with teen sensation Debbie Gibson. Luke was stepping out with, strangely, another popster, Shirley Lewis. Saturation coverage followed with tales of riches, glories, fast cars, exploits.

But then came a strange silence. Eight months of nothing. In many ways, Bros died at Wembley in August. The tabloids (faithfulness was never a virtue) were circling like hungry vultures. It was suggested that the concert wasn't selling as well as it might. Bros were finished!

It was true, the stadium wasn't full. But still, how many pop groups could get 60,000 young kids in a British stadium? Pre-pubescents who really should have been tucked up in bed hours ago?

There was a lovely moment in the concert which was teenybop in a nutshell. Matt, the singing Bros, asked the crowd if they wanted to see Luke, the drumming Bros, dance. They did. So Luke jumped out from behind his kit, rushed to the front of the stage and danced. Cleverly, the drums thumped away regardless. The assembled press corps sniggered spitefully. The girls simply screamed.

There's an old Doors lyric: 'The boys don't know, but the little girls understand.' Quite. You don't really need drums, you just need that old magic dust.

Despite the painting-by-numbers approach, there is a discernible wit at work. *When Will I Be Famous?* was a straightforward enough plea. The fans responded and were rewarded with a song called *I Owe You Nothing*. Thanks fans. The Craig saga came and went and was followed by a song called *Drop The Boy*. A nice touch. Someone's laughing – perhaps it's the million-pound boy Craig. More likely it's the multi-million-pound man Watkins.

Bros will disappear. Unless they have a remarkable hidden talent (George Michael), they'll disappear. Already, they've been overtaken in the tabloid pin-up stakes by the equally asexual Jason Donovan, another blond boy in denims, though warmer and less witty. Their records will stop selling. They will try to break America. They will fall short of the mark, return home and have 'think'-pieces written about the Bros phenomenon in serious journals.●

Jeremy Novick

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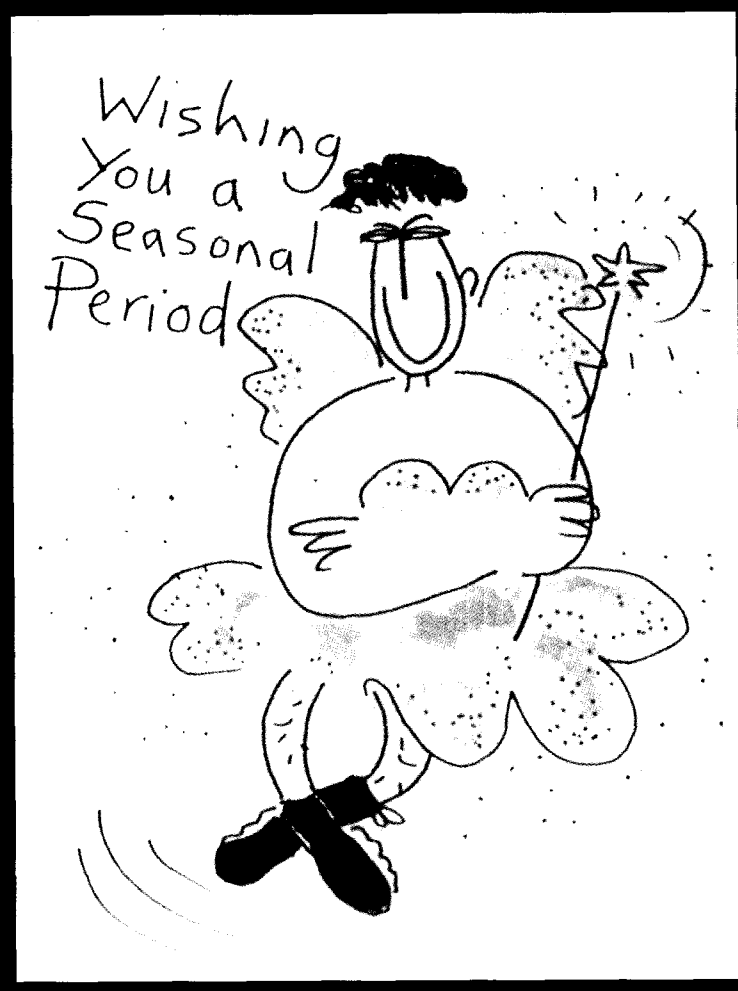

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